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THE

BOOK OF THE CHURCH.

BY ROBERT SOUTHEY, Esq., LL.D.

“Recito memoriam perfuncti periculi, prædicationem amplissimi
beneficii, vocem officii præsentis, testimonium præteriti temporis.”—
CICERO, *pro Sextio*.

Seventh Edition.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1859.

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EDINBURGH :
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TO THE

REV^d PETER ELMSLEY, D.D.

PRINCIPAL OF ST ALBAN'S HALL, CAMDEN PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT HISTORY, ETC. ETC.

This Book is Inscribed,

AS

A MEMORIAL OF RESPECT AND
FRIENDSHIP.

School of Theology
at Claremont

PREFACE.

IN the brief Advertisement prefixed to the first edition of this Book, it was said that references had not been given, because the scale of the work was not one which would either require or justify a display of research. The late Mr Charles Butler, seizing the advantage which he thought was thus given him, charged me, in his Book of the Roman Catholic Church, with proceeding upon an avowed plan of withholding from the reader the authorities for my assertions. This accusation was disposed of in a manner to which no reply has been attempted. The letters which, under the title of "*Vindiciæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*," I addressed to that gentleman, adduced more authorities than he expected, or wished to be reminded of, and more proofs than can ever be invalidated, of that system of imposition and wickedness which has been carried on by the Romish Church.

It is not so easy to deal with vague imputations as with specific charges. Mr Short, in the Preface to his "Sketch

of the History of the Church of England," has asserted that the *Book of the Church* is "*not free from such views of the subject as can never contribute to the discovery of truth.*" Now, as members of the Church of England, there can be no difference of opinion between Mr Short and myself upon all the vital points of our subject ; where any may exist, it can only be upon matters infinitely inconsiderable when compared with those upon which we must necessarily accord. I know not, therefore, what there can be in my views more than in his own, which should render me unwilling to seek for truth, incapable of perceiving it, or capable of disguising it.

KESWICK, *Aug.* 26, 1837.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION,	1

CHAPTER I.

Remains of Patriarchal Faith among the Britons,	2
Druidical theory of Progressive Life,	<i>ib.</i>
Deities worshipped by the Britons,	3
Sacred Fire,	<i>ib.</i>
Rocking Stones,	<i>ib.</i>
Mistletoe,	4
Human Sacrifices,	<i>ib.</i>
Domestic Institutions,	5

CHAPTER II.

Heathenism of the Romans only believed by the vulgar,	5
Unconnected with morality,	<i>ib.</i>
First introduction of Christianity into Britain,	6
First Church erected at Glastonbury,	<i>ib.</i>
St Alban,	7
Corruptions of Christianity,	8
Heathenism of the Britons still cherished,	<i>ib.</i>
Religion of the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes,	9
Their idols,	<i>ib.</i>
Christianity disappears from the kingdoms of the Heptarchy,	11

CHAPTER III.

	PAGE
Pope Gregory and the Saxon Slaves,	11
Missionaries sent from Rome to England,	12
They land in the Isle of Thanet,	14
Interview with Ethelbert, King of Kent,	<i>ib.</i>
Conversion of the Kingdom of Kent,	15
Conversion of Essex and East Anglia,	16
Edwin at the Court of East Anglia,	<i>ib.</i>
Idolatry restored in Kent and Essex,	19
Abolished there for ever,	<i>ib.</i>
Edwin marries a Princess of Kent,	<i>ib.</i>
Paulinus sent to Northumbria,	20
Letters to Edwin from the Pope,	21
Conversion of Edwin and the Northumbrians,	22
Edwin slain,	24
Christianity restored in Northumbria, and introduced in Wessex,	25
Mercia and Sussex receive it,	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER IV.

Causes of the easy introduction of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons,	25
Their Paganism had no root,	26
Character of the Missionaries,	<i>ib.</i>
Political circumstances which favoured their success,	27
No systematic resistance,	28
Benefits arising from the change,	<i>ib.</i>
First written laws of the Anglo-Saxons,	<i>ib.</i>
Reason why Latin became the language of the Church,	29
Learning of the Clergy,	<i>ib.</i>
General advantages from the change to all ranks,	30
Monasteries,	31
The Welsh gradually conform to the Roman Church,	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER V.

The Danish Conquest,	32
Origin of the Scaldic Mythology,	<i>ib.</i>
The Edda,	36

CONTENTS.

ix

	PAGE
System of Piracy,	36
The Berserkir,	37
Conversion of the Danes,	38

CHAPTER VI.

First Endowments of the Anglo-Saxon Church,	39
Theodore, seventh Archbishop of Canterbury,	40
First legislative provision for the Clergy,	<i>ib.</i>
Tithes granted by King Ethelwolph,	<i>ib.</i>
Origin of Parishes,	41
Rural Deans,	42
Learning of the Clergy,	<i>ib.</i>
Decline of the Anglo-Saxon Church,	<i>ib.</i>
St Dunstan,	43
Miracle before his birth,	44
Legendary History of Glastonbury,	<i>ib.</i>
Dunstan banished from Court,	47
His cell at Glastonbury,	<i>ib.</i>
He is made Abbot of Glastonbury,	48
He refuses the Bishopric of Crediton, in order to obtain the Primacy,	<i>ib.</i>
His intention of remodelling the Anglo-Saxon Church,	<i>ib.</i>
The Benedictines,	49
Celibacy of the Clergy,	50
Edwy and Elgiva,	51
Banishment of Dunstan,	<i>ib.</i>
He is recalled upon the success of his party,	52
Odo fraudulently consecrates him for his successor,	<i>ib.</i>
He obtains the Primacy,	53
His ascendancy during Edgar's reign,	54
Fraudulent miracles at Winchester and Calne,	<i>ib.</i>
Practices at his death,	55

CHAPTER VII.

Ravages of the Danes,	57
General corruption of manners among the Anglo-Saxons,	<i>ib.</i>
The Norman Conquest,	<i>ib.</i>
Lanfranc appointed Primate,	59

	PAGE
Wulstan,	59
William the Conqueror resists the Papal claims,	61
Prudent conduct of Lanfranc,	62
Slave trade prohibited by his means,	<i>ib.</i>
One Liturgy introduced,	<i>ib.</i>
Lanfranc continues the system of imposture,	<i>ib.</i>
Pope Hildebrand,	63
Question of investiture,	64
Struggle between the Imperial and the Papal power, .	65
William Rufus,	66
Anselm appointed to succeed Lanfranc,	<i>ib.</i>
His contest with the King,	<i>ib.</i>
Henry I.,	68
Anselm returns to England,	69
The matter in dispute compromised,	<i>ib.</i>
Anselm enforces celibacy upon the clergy,	<i>ib.</i>
Miracles at his funeral,	70
Improvement of church architecture,	71
The Papal cause promoted during Stephen's reign, . .	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER VIII.

Henry II.,	71
Exemption of the clergy from the secular laws,	72
Becket made Primate,	73
Motives for his irregular promotion,	<i>ib.</i>
Immediate change in his conduct,	74
He solicits the canonisation of Anselm,	75
He reclaims church property which had been alienated, .	<i>ib.</i>
Henry complains of the Ecclesiastical Courts,	76
Becket insists upon their privileges,	<i>ib.</i>
He yields upon the representation of the Prelates, . . .	77
Parliament at Clarendon,	<i>ib.</i>
Laws there enacted,	78
Becket promises to observe, but demurs at signing them, .	79
He attempts to leave the kingdom,	80
Becket is summoned before the Parliament at Northampton,	81
Rigorous and unjust demands of the King,	<i>ib.</i>
Becket is advised to resign the Primacy,	83
He collects the poor at his table,	<i>ib.</i>

CONTENTS.

xi

	PAGE
He appeals to the Pope,	84
He goes to the Parliament with the cross in his hand,	85
Henry allows the bishops to cite Becket before the Pope,	86
Becket cites them thither,	87
He escapes to the Continent,	88
The King of France protects him,	<i>ib.</i>
Henry sends Ambassadors to the Pope,	<i>ib.</i>
Becket lays the Constitutions of Clarendon before the Pope,	89
He resigns the Primacy, and receives it again from the Pope,	90
Rash and inhuman conduct of the King,	91
The Pope appoints Becket Legate in England,	92
Henry appeals to the Pope,	93
Becket excommunicates his enemies,	94
Excommunication,	95
He threatens the King with it,	96
Henry negotiates at Rome,	98
Becket remonstrates with the Pope,	<i>ib.</i>
Legates sent to mediate,	99
Becket will concede nothing,	100
Interview between Henry and Becket, in presence of the King of France,	101
Louis's admiration for Becket,	102
The Pope demands restitution of the Church revenues from Henry,	103
Becket excommunicates many of the King's household,	<i>ib.</i>
The Nuncio threatens Henry,	105
Henry makes his subjects abjure the Primate and the Pope,	106
The Archbishop of York authorised to crown Prince Henry,	<i>ib.</i>
Duplicity of the Pope,	<i>ib.</i>
Second interview with Becket,	108
Reconciliation,	109
Becket's temper at that time,	111
He requests permission to return to England,	<i>ib.</i>
Last interview with the King,	<i>ib.</i>
Temper in which he returned to England,	112
He sends a sentence of excommunication before him by a nun,	113
Lands at Sandwich,	114
Entrance into Canterbury,	<i>ib.</i>
Messengers from the King,	115

	PAGE
He sets out for Woodstock,	115
Is ordered back to Canterbury,	<i>ib.</i>
Excommunicates his enemies,	116
Henry's indignation at his conduct,	<i>ib.</i>
Murder of Becket,	119

CHAPTER IX.

Henry endeavours to prevent the murder,	120
His fears and remorse,	<i>ib.</i>
Conduct of the French King and the Pope,	121
Terms of accommodation,	122
Reported miracles at Becket's tomb,	123
His canonisation,	<i>ib.</i>
Henry's penance at his shrine,	125
Advantages gained by the Pope,	126
Richard I.,	127
Accession of John,	<i>ib.</i>
Election of a Primate,	128
The Pope appoints Stephen Langton,	<i>ib.</i>
Innocent's present to the King,	129
John's resentment at his interference,	<i>ib.</i>
Innocent's letter,	130
He interdicts the kingdom,	<i>ib.</i>
John declared to be excommunicated and deposed,	131
The King of France proposes to seize the vacant throne,	132
Peter of Pomfret,	<i>ib.</i>
John submits to the Pope,	<i>ib.</i>
Surrenders the kingdom to the Papal See,	133
Langton absolves him,	<i>ib.</i>
Question of restitution,	134
Dispute with the barons,	<i>ib.</i>
Langton produces the Charter of Henry I.	135
Confederacy of the b̄arons at Edmundsbury,	136
John takes the Cross,	137
He yields to them at Runnymede,	138
Magna Charta,	<i>ib.</i>
The Pope annuls the Charter,	139
Admirable conduct of Langton in these transactions,	140
Complete triumph of the Papal power,	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER X.

	PAGE
View of the Papal System,	141
Its adaptation to the state of Christendom in the dark ages,	<i>ib.</i>
Sanctuaries,	<i>ib.</i>
Truce of God,	142
Schemes of Hildebrand,	143
Tradition substituted for Scripture,	<i>ib.</i>
Relics,	144
Saint-Worship,	146
The Virgin Mary,	148
Assimilation of Popery to Paganism,	149
Pelagius and Augustine,	150
Corruptions introduced from the Oriental Philosophy,	151
Effects of these corruptions,	152
Self-tormenting,	<i>ib.</i>
Works of Supererogation,	154
Indulgences,	155
Confession,	<i>ib.</i>
Transubstantiation,	157
Power of the Pope,	158

CHAPTER XI.

The Waldenses,	160
St Francis,	161
Franciscans,	<i>ib.</i>
Dominicans,	162
Rivalry of these Orders,	<i>ib.</i>
Evangelium Eternum,	164
Persecution of the rigid Franciscans,	165
Papal extortions,	<i>ib.</i>
Statute of Mortmain,	166
Friars in the Universities,	<i>ib.</i>
Wicliffe,	167
Wicliffe writes against the Papal claims,	168
Sent to negotiate with the Papal ministers at Bruges,	<i>ib.</i>
Protected by John of Gaunt,	169
Wicliffe translates the Bible,	171
Attacks the doctrine of transubstantiation,	<i>ib.</i>

	PAGE
Required to explain his doctrine,	171
His followers called Lollards,	172
His opinions condemned by the Primate	<i>ib.</i>
His death,	173
His writings introduced into Bohemia,	<i>ib.</i>
Archbishop Arundel,	174
The Lancastrian usurpation,	<i>ib.</i>
Dangerous opinions of the Lollards,	<i>ib.</i>
William Sautre,	175
He abjures his opinions,	<i>ib.</i>
Petitions to be heard before Parliament,	<i>ib.</i>
Condemned as a heretic,	176
Form of his degradation,	<i>ib.</i>
He is burnt alive,	177
William Thorpe,	<i>ib.</i>
John Badby,	<i>ib.</i>
Laws against the Lollards,	178
Inquisitors of heresy appointed at Oxford,	179
Lord Cobham denounced,	<i>ib.</i>
The King talks with him,	<i>ib.</i>
He is excommunicated,	180
He presents his belief to the King,	<i>ib.</i>
Henry delivers him to the Archbishop,	182
The first appearance before the Consistory,	<i>ib.</i>
Questions propounded to him in writing,	184
His second appearance,	<i>ib.</i>
He is condemned as a heretic,	188
He escapes from the Tower,	190
Attempted insurrection of the Lollards,	<i>ib.</i>
Lord Cobham taken and executed,	191
New laws against the Lollards,	<i>ib.</i>
Wicliffe's bones disinterred and burnt,	192
Bishop Pecock,	193
His arguments against the Lollards,	<i>ib.</i>
His prayer that the Scriptures may always be the standard of faith,	194
Accused of heresy,	<i>ib.</i>
Submits to the Church,	195
His abjuration,	<i>ib.</i>
Imprisonment and death,	196

CONTENTS.

xv

	PAGE
Persecution suspended during the Civil Wars,	196
Resumed under Henry VII.	<i>ib.</i>
First female martyr,	<i>ib.</i>
Bishop Nix,	197

CHAPTER XII.

Statute of Præmunire,	198
Church property threatened under Henry IV. and V.	<i>ib.</i>
Henry VIII.,	199
Wolsey,	<i>ib.</i>
Queen Catharine,	200
Question of the Divorce,	<i>ib.</i>
Cromwell,	202
Cranmer,	<i>ib.</i>
The clergy acknowledge Henry as Head of the Church,	<i>ib.</i>
Condition of the Lollards who abjured,	203
Bilney,	<i>ib.</i>
His recantation and repentance,	204
His conversation in prison,	<i>ib.</i>
His martyrdom,	205
Traduced by the Romanists, and vindicated by Parker,	206
Bainham,	<i>ib.</i>
Tindal,	207
He translates the New Testament,	208
The Book burnt,	<i>ib.</i>
Sir Thomas More,	209
He writes against Tindal,	<i>ib.</i>
Frith,	211
Tindal's character of him,	212
He is imprisoned,	<i>ib.</i>
Tindal's exhortations,	213
He refuses to escape,	214
His martyrdom,	<i>ib.</i>
Tindal martyred in Brabant,	215
The Bible allowed to be read,	<i>ib.</i>
Anne Boleyn,	<i>ib.</i>
Falsehood of the Romanists concerning her,	216
Latimer,	<i>ib.</i>
The Nun of Kent,	217

	PAGE
Fisher,	218
Sir T. More justifies himself concerning the Nun, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
His sense of danger,	219
He refuses to subscribe to the lawfulness of the Divorce, .	220
Execution of some Carthusians for refusing to acknowledge the King's supremacy,	221
Sir T. More's trial,	222
Fisher and More executed,	223
Cranmer intercedes for the Lady Mary,	224
Reasons for suppressing the Monasteries,	<i>ib.</i>
Cranmer's views concerning them,	<i>ib.</i>
Monasteries visited,	225
Lesser Monasteries suppressed,	226
Death of Queen Catharine,	227
Queen Anne Boleyn put to death,	<i>ib.</i>
Articles of Faith,	228
Discontent of the Romanists,	<i>ib.</i>
Henry replies to the Lincolnshire petition,	229
Pilgrimage of Grace,	<i>ib.</i>
Dissolution of the Monasteries,	232
Distribution of their lands,	<i>ib.</i>
False miracles exposed,	233
Becket's bones burnt,	234
The Pope excommunicates Henry,	<i>ib.</i>
Gardiner,	235
The Bible ordered to be provided in all Parish Churches, .	<i>ib.</i>
Death of Queen Jane,	<i>ib.</i>
Lambert,	236
He is accused of heresy,	237
He appeals to the King,	<i>ib.</i>
His trial and martyrdom,	<i>ib.</i>
The Six Articles,	238
Fall of Cromwell,	239
Bonner,	<i>ib.</i>
Use of the Scriptures restricted,	240
Anne Askew,	<i>ib.</i>
Her examination,	241
Her address to Henry,	242
She is put to the torture,	<i>ib.</i>
Her martyrdom,	243

CONTENTS.

xvii

	PAGE
Cranmer accused to the King,	243
Henry reproves his accusers,	245
The King alters Cranmer's arms,	246
Abuse of the Bible,	<i>ib.</i>
Henry's death,	247
His Will,	<i>ib.</i>
Henry popular to the last,	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER XIII.

Coronation of Edward VI.,	249
Progress of Cranmer's opinions,	250
Injunctions to the clergy,	251
Images destroyed,	<i>ib.</i>
Mass abolished,	252
Restrictions upon preaching,	<i>ib.</i>
New Liturgy,	253
Marriage of the clergy permitted,	<i>ib.</i>
Hooper scruples at wearing the habits,	254
Tables substituted for altars,	255
Plunder of the churches,	256
Somerset,	<i>ib.</i>
Chuntries abolished,	258
Destruction of the Monasteries,	<i>ib.</i>
Destruction of manuscripts,	259
Rents raised by the step-lords,	260
Western insurrection,	<i>ib.</i>
Demands of the insurgents,	261
The King's answer,	262
Insurrection in Norfolk,	263
Northumberland,	264
Plan for uniting the Protestant Churches,	<i>ib.</i>
Joan Bocher,	265
Edward's charitable foundations,	266
His death,	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER XIV.

Lady Jane Grey,	267
Mary promises not to change the established religion,	268

	PAGE
The people hostile to the Reformation,	268
False promises of moderation,	269
Rogers the Protomartyr,	270
Saunders,	271
Hooper,	274
Taylor,	279
Bradford,	286
Farrer,	290
Ridley,	<i>ib.</i>
Latimer,	294
Elizabeth's life in danger,	300
Death of Gardiner,	<i>ib.</i>
Extent of the persecution under his administration, .	301
Remarks of Father Persons on the humble condition of the martyrs,	302
Brutality of this writer,	<i>ib.</i>
Fuller's reply to his remarks,	<i>ib.</i>
Philpot,	303
Cranmer,	308
His conduct after King Edward's death,	<i>ib.</i>
Pardoned for the treason,	<i>ib.</i>
Arraigned for blasphemy, incontinence, and heresy, .	309
He recants,	310
It is still determined to burn him,	311
His demeanour in St Mary's,	<i>ib.</i>
He declares his adherence to the Protestant faith, .	315
His martyrdom,	316
Effect of Cranmer's martyrdom,	<i>ib.</i>
Julius Palmer,	317
George Tankerfield,	<i>ib.</i>
Fortitude of the martyrs,	318
Further cruelty of the persecutors,	319
Commissioners for Inquisition,	<i>ib.</i>
Number of sufferers,	320
Last martyrs at Canterbury,	<i>ib.</i>
Death of Queen Mary,	321

CHAPTER XV.

Elizabeth's public entrance,	322
--------------------------------------	-----

CONTENTS.

xix

	PAGE
Her thanksgiving for her deliverance, . . .	322
Mary's funeral sermon, . . .	323
Preaching forbidden for awhile, . . .	324
The bishops oppose the Queen's supremacy, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
Insolence of Story, . . .	325
The bishops deprived, . . .	326
Parker made Primate, . . .	327
The clergy in general conform, . . .	329
Some of the deposed bishops write to the Queen, . . .	330
Her answer, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
The Catholic Princes interfere in favour of the Romanists, . . .	331
The Pope's Nuncio not permitted to enter England, . . .	332
Mary, Queen of Scots, . . .	333
Bull of Pius V., . . .	334
Massacre of St Bartholomew's Day, . . .	336
Catholic Seminaries, . . .	338
The Jesuits, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
Campian, . . .	340
Plots against Elizabeth, . . .	341
Mary, Queen of Scots, put to death, . . .	342
War in the Low Countries, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
Sir William Stanley's treason, . . .	343
Defeat of the Spanish Armada, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
Falsehoods concerning the state of England, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
Anabaptists burnt, . . .	345
Intercession of John Fox in their behalf, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
The Puritans, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
Forbearance with the first Nonconformists, . . .	346
Leicester, . . .	347
Views of the second race of Nonconformists, . . .	348
Calvinistic discipline, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
Consequences of Puritanism foreseen by Parker, . . .	349
Their violence, . . .	350
Third race of Nonconformists, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
Puritan libels, . . .	351
Court of High Commission, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
Evils produced by contumacy on one side, and compulsion on the other, . . .	352
Cartwright, . . .	353

CHAPTER XVI.

	PAGE
Hopes of the Puritans on the accession of James I.,	353
Language of the Roman Catholics concerning him,	354
Petition of the Puritans,	<i>ib.</i>
Conferences at Hampton Court,	355
The Puritans disown their representatives,	365
New Translation of the Bible,	<i>ib.</i>
Marriage of the clergy legitimated,	<i>ib.</i>
Alienation of Church lands prevented,	<i>ib.</i>
Synod of Dort,	366
James I.,	<i>ib.</i>
His tolerant feelings,	367
Gunpowder treason,	<i>ib.</i>
Oath of allegiance,	368
Increased acrimony of the Puritans and of the Romanists,	<i>ib.</i>
Bancroft,	<i>ib.</i>
Abbot,	369

CHAPTER XVII.

State of the Church at the accession of Charles I.,	370
Growing ascendancy of the House of Commons,	<i>ib.</i>
Political embarrassments of the King,	371
Growth of the Puritans,	<i>ib.</i>
Importance which they attach to sermons,	372
Lay-impropriations,	373
Association for purchasing them,	<i>ib.</i>
Design of the feoffers,	<i>ib.</i>
The feoffment is condemned,	374
Laud,	<i>ib.</i>
Rise of a republican party,	<i>ib.</i>
Union of parties against the Government,	375
Laud and the King calumniated, as intending to re-establish Popery,	<i>ib.</i>
Political consequences of Puritanism foreseen by Laud,	<i>ib.</i>
He attempts to enforce conformity,	377
Book of Sports,	<i>ib.</i>
Punishment of Prynne, Bastwicke, and Burton,	378

CONTENTS.

xxi

	PAGE
New Canons,	378
Dr Manwaring,	379
Laud threatened by incendiary letters,	380
His munificent encouragement of learning,	<i>ib.</i>
Intention of improving the condition of the lower clergy,	381
Puritans prevented from emigrating,	382
Insurrection in Scotland,	383
The Covenant,	<i>ib.</i>
Embarrassments of the King,	384
Bishops impeached of high treason,	<i>ib.</i>
Activity of the seditious clergy,	385
Laud committed to the Tower,	<i>ib.</i>
The bishops waive their right of voting in the case of Strafford,	<i>ib.</i>
Bills brought in to take away their votes, and to abolish Episcopacy,	386
Sir Edward Dering,	<i>ib.</i>
The Protestation,	387
High Commission Court abolished,	<i>ib.</i>
Committees for religion,	<i>ib.</i>
Archbishop Williams,	<i>ib.</i>
Bill for the suppression of Deans and Chapters,	388
Arts of the Minority,	<i>ib.</i>
Proposal that the Common Prayer might be disused at pleasure,	<i>ib.</i>
Bowing at the name of Jesus forbidden,	389
Speech of Sir E. Dering against this prohibition,	<i>ib.</i>
Triumph of the Puritans,	390
Dr Pocklington,	391
Petitions against the bishops,	392
Bishops committed to the Tower,	394
Committee for religion,	395
Parliamentary preachers,	<i>ib.</i>
Divine Right of Presbytery asserted,	397
Parliament exercises a dispensing power,	<i>ib.</i>
Case of Goodman the priest,	398
Weekly fast,	<i>ib.</i>
Christmas made a fast,	<i>ib.</i>
Outrages in the Churches,	<i>ib.</i>
Loyal clergy ejected,	399

	PAGE
Chillingworth,	400
Treatment of the clergy,	401
Sir Edward Dering's character of Laud,	402
He protests against the violence of the Puritans,	<i>ib.</i>
Expelled the House for printing his speeches,	<i>ib.</i>
Joins the King,	403
Deserts him, compounds, and dies in wretchedness,	<i>ib.</i>
Articles against Laud,	<i>ib.</i>
Laud committed to the Tower,	405
Refuses to make his escape,	<i>ib.</i>
His last interview with Strafford,	406
Arts used to incite the populace against him,	407
Prynne's conduct respecting the Archbishop's papers,	<i>ib.</i>
Laud resolves to defend himself,	409
Serjeant Wilde's speech,	<i>ib.</i>
Laud's reply,	410
Sir Henry Vane's evidence,	412
Publication of Laud's Diary,	413
Bill of attainder brought in,	414
His defence before the Commons,	415
The Lords threatened unless they condemn him,	416
Opinion of the judges in his favour,	<i>ib.</i>
Six peers pass the bill,	<i>ib.</i>
He produces a pardon under the Great Seal, which is dis- allowed,	417
Brutality of the Commons concerning his sentence,	<i>ib.</i>
On the interference of the Lords, they consent to change it,	<i>ib.</i>
Speech of Laud at his execution,	418
His dying prayer,	420
The Liturgy suppressed,	424
The Directory,	<i>ib.</i>
Attempt to establish the Presbyterian form of Church govern- ment,	426
Erastians,	<i>ib.</i>
Independents,	<i>ib.</i>
Consequence of an ecclesiastical anarchy,	427
Use of the Common Prayer prohibited,	<i>ib.</i>
Terms which the Presbyterians demand from the King,	428
Confiscation of the Church lands,	429
Laws against heresy,	430

CONTENTS.

xxiii

	PAGE
Cromwell,	430
His wish to restore the Episcopal Church,	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER XVIII.

Advice of Charles I. to his son, concerning the Church, .	431
Intention of Charles I. to restore the Church property, .	432
Declaration from Breda,	<i>ib.</i>
Charles willing to grant a toleration,	433
Difficulties of such a measure,	434
The Romanists,	<i>ib.</i>
The Presbyterians,	<i>ib.</i>
Knavery of the London ministers concerning the King's declaration,	436
Their petition against the surplice and the use of the Cross, .	<i>ib.</i>
Conferences between the bishops and the heads of the Pres- byterian clergy,	<i>ib.</i>
Venner's insurrection,	437
Act of Uniformity,	<i>ib.</i>
Nonconforming clergy ejected,	438
Views of the Romish party,	440
Five-mile Act,	<i>ib.</i>
Schemes of the Republican party,	441
Fire of London,	<i>ib.</i>
Popish Plot,	<i>ib.</i>
Accession of James II.,	442
Principles of the clergy,	<i>ib.</i>
Effect of persecution on the Dissenters,	443
Hopes of the Papists,	<i>ib.</i>
Ecclesiastical Commission,	444
Sanicroft,	<i>ib.</i>
Measures of the Court,	445
Declaration for liberty of conscience,	<i>ib.</i>
Petition of the Seven Bishops,	446
Their committal to the Tower,	448
Their trial,	449
Sprat withdraws from the Commission,	452
Sanicroft's admonition to the clergy,	<i>ib.</i>
Scheme of a comprehension,	453
Advice of the bishops to the King,	454

	PAGE
Concessions made by James,	456
The bishops refuse to issue a paper against the Prince of Orange,	457
William lands,	<i>ib.</i>
James writes to Sancroft after his flight,	458
The bishops vote for a Regency,	460
The Nonjurors,	<i>ib.</i>
Conclusion,	461

THE BOOK OF THE CHURCH.

MANIFOLD as are the blessings for which Englishmen are beholden to the institutions of their country, there is no part of those institutions from which they derive more important advantages than from its Church Establishment, none by which the temporal condition of all ranks has been so materially improved. So many of our countrymen would not be ungrateful for these benefits, if they knew how numerous and how great they are, how dearly they were prized by our forefathers, and at how dear a price they were purchased for our inheritance; by what religious exertions, what heroic devotion, what precious lives, consumed in pious labours, wasted away in dungeons, or offered up amid the flames. This is a knowledge which, if early inculcated, might arm the young heart against the pestilent errors of these distempered times. I offer, therefore, to those who regard with love and reverence the religion which they have received from their fathers, a brief but comprehensive record, diligently, faithfully, and conscientiously composed, which they may put into the hands of their children. Herein it will be seen from what heathenish delusions and inhuman rites the inhabitants of this island have been delivered by the Christian faith; in what manner the best interests of the country were advanced by the clergy even during the darkest ages of papal domination; the errors and crimes of the Romish Church, and how, when its corruptions were at the worst, the day-break of the Reformation appeared among us: the progress of that Reformation through evil and through good; the establishment of a Church pure in its doctrines, irreproachable in its order, beautiful in its forms; and the conduct of that Church proved, both in adverse and in prosperous times, alike faithful to its principles when it adhered to the monarchy during a successful rebellion, and when it opposed the monarch who would have brought back the Romish superstition, and together with the religion, would have overthrown the liberties of England.

CHAPTER I.

RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT BRITONS.

THE light of God, which at the creation was imparted to man, hath never been extinguished. From the patriarchs it descended to the prophets, and from the prophets to the apostles; but there were many who wandered and lost the light, and their offspring became inheritors of darkness. Thus it fared with our forefathers. We know not when, or from whence, they reached the British Islands; Scripture hath not recorded it, and it was in times beyond the reach of other history. There is reason to believe that they brought with them some glimmerings of patriarchal faith, and some traditional knowledge of patriarchal history. Other tribes followed at various times and from various places,—some from the Baltic and from Germany, some from the opposite coasts of Belgium and Gaul, others from Spain; the Phenicians also traded here; and our fathers being ignorant, and far removed from those among whom the truth was preserved, received the fables and superstitions of the new-comers, and blended them with their own, till they fell at length into the abominations of idolatry.

Their priests, the Druids, are said to have retained the belief of one supreme God, all-wise, all-mighty, and all-merciful, from whom all things which have life proceed. They held, also, the immortality of the soul: whatever else they taught was deceit or vanity. Thus, it is said,* they believed that the soul began to exist in the meanest insect, and proceeded through all the lower orders of existence, ascending at each new birth to a higher form, till it arrived at its human stage; this, according to their philosophy, being necessary, that it might collect, during its progress, the properties and powers of animal life. This lower state was a state of evil; but there could be no sin there because there could be no choice, and therefore death was always the passage to a higher step of being. But when the soul had reached its human form, it then possessed the knowledge of good and evil, for man is born to make his choice between them; he is born also to experience change and suffering, these being the conditions of humanity. The soul, thus elevated, became

* In this account of the Bardic or Druidical philosophy, I follow the Triads, and the authority of my old acquaintances, Mr William Owen and Mr Edward Williams. The authenticity of the Welsh remains has been investigated by Mr Turner, with his characteristic industry and judgment.

responsible, and if it had chosen evil instead of good, returned after death to the state of evil, and was condemned to an inferior grade of animal life, low in proportion to the debasement whereto it had reduced itself. But they who had chosen the better part, which it is free for all to choose, passed into a state from whence it was not possible to fall: for when death had delivered them from the body, evil had power over them no longer, because they had experienced it, and knew that it was evil: and they were no longer subject to suffering, neither to change; but continuing the same in goodness and in heavenly affections, they increased in knowledge, and thereby in happiness, through all eternity. They believed also that the beatified soul retained the love of its country and its kind; and that the spirits of the good sometimes returned to earth, and became prophets among mankind, that they might assist their brethren, and by teaching them heavenly things, oppose the power of Cythraul, or the Evil One.

These were but the conceits of imagination; and they who impose upon the people their own imaginations, however innocent, prepare the way for the devices of deceit and wickedness. Good men may have mingled these fancies with the truth; bad ones feigned that there were other gods beside Him in whom we live and move and have our being; Teutates, whom they called the father, and Taranis the thunderer, and Hesus the god of battles, and Andraste the goddess of victory; Hu the mighty, by whom it is believed that Noah, the second parent of the human race, was intended; Ceridwen, a goddess in whose rites the preservation of mankind in the ark was figured; and Beal or Belinus, . . . for the Phenicians had introduced the worship of their Baal. By favour of these false gods, the Druids pretended to foretell future events, and as their servants and favourites they demanded gifts and offerings from the deluded multitude. The better to secure this revenue, they required the people, at the beginning of winter, to extinguish all their fires on one day, and kindle them again from the sacred fire of the Druids, which would make the house fortunate for the ensuing year: and if any man came who had not paid his yearly dues, they refused to give him a spark, neither durst any of his neighbours relieve him; nor might he himself procure fire by any other means, so that he and his family were deprived of it till he had discharged the uttermost of his debt. They erected also great stones so cunningly fitted one upon another, that if the upper one were touched in a certain place, though only with a

finger, it would rock ; whereas no strength of man might avail to move it if applied to any other part : hither they led those who were accused of any crime, and under pretence that the gods would, by this form of trial, manifest the guilt or innocence of the party, directed him where to touch and make the proof : and thus at their discretion they either absolved the accused, or made them appear guilty.

The mistletoe, the seed whereof is eaten and voided by the birds, and thus conveyed from one tree to another, they affected to hold in veneration. When it was discovered growing upon an oak, upon which tree it is rarely to be found, the Druids went thither with great solemnity, and all things were made ready for sacrifice and for feasting. Two white bulls were fastened by their horns to the tree ; the officiating priest ascended, and cut the mistletoe with a golden knife ; others stood below to receive it in a white woollen cloth, and it was carefully preserved, that water wherein it had been steeped might be administered to men as an antidote against poison, and to cattle for the sake of making them fruitful. The sacrifice was then performed. The best and most beautiful of the flocks and herds were selected for this purpose. The victim was divided into three parts : one was consumed as a burnt offering ; he who made the offering feasted upon another, with his friends ; and the third was the portion of the Druids. In this wise did they delude the people. But they had worse rites than these, and were guilty of greater abominations. They were notorious, above the priests of every other idolatry, for the practice of pretended magic. They made the people pass through fire in honour of Beal ; and they offered up the life of man in sacrifice, saying that when the victim was smitten with a sword, they could discover events which were to come by the manner in which he fell, and the flowing of his blood, and the quivering of his body in the act of death. When a chief was afflicted with sickness, they sacrificed a human victim, because they said the continuance of his life might be purchased if another life were offered up as its price ; and in like manner, men were offered up when any calamity befell the people, and when they were about to engage in war. Naked women, stained with the dark blue dye of woad, assisted at these bloody rites. On greater occasions, a huge figure in the rude likeness of man, was made of wicker-work, and filled with men : as many as were condemned to death for their offences were put into it ; but if these did not suffice to fill the image, the innocent were thrust in, and they sur-

rounded it with straw and wood, and set fire to it, and consumed it, with all whom it contained.

Their domestic institutions were not less pernicious than their idolatry. A wife was common to all the kinsmen of her husband, a custom which prevented all connubial love, and destroyed the natural affection between child and father; for every man had as many wives as he had kinsmen, and no man knew his child, nor did any child know its father. These were the abominations of our British fathers after the light of the Patriarchs was lost among them, and before they received the light of the Gospel.

CHAPTER II.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE ROMANS.—FIRST INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY.—PERSECUTION.—FIRST ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY.—RELIGION OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS.

WHEN the Romans established themselves as conquerors in Britain, the authority of the Druids was destroyed, and one system of idolatry was exchanged for another as far as Roman civilisation extended. The heathenism, which was thus introduced, contained fewer remains of patriarchal truths than that which it displaced: it was less bloody, because, during the progress of knowledge and refinement, the more inhuman of its rites had fallen into disuse; and it was not so fraudulent, because for the same reason it had in great measure ceased to obtain belief, or to command respect; but inasmuch as it had any influence over the conduct of the people, its effect was worse, because the fables which were related of its false deities, gave a sanction to immoralities of every kind, even the foulest and most abominable crimes. So gross indeed was this iniquitous mythology, that none except the most ignorant of the multitude gave ear to it; the priests who performed the service of the temple laughed in secret at the rites which they practised and the fictions upon which their ceremonies were founded, and the educated ranks looked upon the credulity of the vulgar with scorn. Religion had no connexion with * morality among the Greek and Roman heathens, and this was one main cause of their degeneracy

* I owe this remark to Stillingfleet, by whom it is coupled with this weighty caution, "Let us have a care of as dangerous a separation between faith and works."

and corruption. Religion consisted with them merely in the observance of certain rites, and the performance of sacrifices; and men were left to the schools of philosophy, there to choose their system of morals, and learn a rule of life. And in those schools the blind led the blind. Some of the bedarkened teachers affirmed that there were no Gods; others, that if there were any, they took no thought for this world, neither regarded the affairs of men. By some, the highest happiness was placed in sensual gratification; by others, in the practice of a cold stern virtue, of which pride was the principle, and selfishness the root. A miserable condition of society, in which the evil-disposed had nothing to restrain them but the fear of human laws; and the good, nothing to console them under the keenest sorrows which man is born to; no hope beyond this transitory and uncertain life; nothing to disarm death of its sting; nothing to assure them of victory over the grave. Yet the Romans became fiercely intolerant in support of a mythology wherein they had no belief: they admitted other idolatries, and even erected altars to the gods of the Britons: but when the tidings of salvation were proclaimed, they were kindled with rage, and persecuted the Christians to death.

It cannot now be ascertained by whom the glad tidings of the Gospel were first brought into Britain. The most probable tradition says that it was Bran,* the father of Caractacus, who, having been led into captivity with his son, and hearing the Word at Rome, received it, and became on his return the means of delivering his countrymen from a worse bondage. There is also some reason to believe that Claudia, who is spoken of together with Pudens, by the Apostle Paul, was a British lady of this illustrious household: because a British woman of that name is known to have been the wife of Pudens† at that time. Legends, which rest upon less credible grounds, pretend that a British king called Lucius, who was tributary to the Romans, was baptized with many of his subjects. These things are doubtful: "the light of the Word shone here," says Fuller, the Church historian, "but we know not who kindled it." It is said that the first church was erected at Glastonbury; and this tradition may seem to deserve credit, because it was not contradicted in those ages when other churches would have found it profitable to advance a similar pretension. The building is described as a rude structure of wicker-work, like the dwellings of the people in those days, and differing from them only in its dimensions, which

* Owen's Cambrian Biography, Triads.

† Martial, l. iv. ep. 13.

were threescore feet in length, and twenty-six in breadth. An abbey was afterwards erected there, one of the finest of those edifices, and one of the most remarkable for the many interesting circumstances connected with it. The destruction of this beautiful and venerable fabric is one of the crimes by which our Reformation was disgraced.

The first man who laid down his life in Britain for the Christian faith, was Saint Alban; Saint he has been called for that reason, and the title may be continued to him in mark of honour and respect, now that it has ceased to carry with it a superstitious meaning to our ears. During the tenth and most rigorous of the persecutions, which was the only one that extended to this island, a Christian priest, flying from his persecutors, came to the city of Verulamium, and took shelter in Alban's house; he, not being of the faith himself, concealed him for pure compassion; but when he observed the devotion of his guest, how fervent it was and how firm, and the consolation and the joy which he appeared to find in prayer, his heart was touched; and he listened to his teaching, and became a believer. Meantime the persecutors traced the object of their pursuit to this city, and discovered his retreat. But when they came to search the house, Alban, putting on the hair cassock of his teacher, delivered himself into their hands as if he had been the fugitive, and was carried before the heathen governor; while the man whom they sought had leisure and opportunity to provide for his escape. Because he refused either to betray his guest, or offer sacrifice to the Roman gods, he was scourged, and then led to execution upon the spot where the abbey now stands, which, in after-times, was erected to his memory, and still bears his name. That spot was then a beautiful meadow on a little rising ground, "seeming," says the Venerable Bede, "a fit theatre for the martyr's triumph." There he was beheaded, and a soldier also at the same time; who, it is said, was so affected by the resignation and magnanimity of this virtuous sufferer, that he chose to suffer with him rather than incur the guilt of being his executioner.* Monkish writers have disfigured the story with many fictions in their wonted manner, but there is no reason to question that the main facts are historical truths. Others of our countrymen, some few whose names alone are preserved, and more of whom all memory has perished, laid down their lives under the same persecution. Concerning them, the worthy Fuller has beautifully said "It was superstition in the Athenians

* Bede, l. i. c. 7.

to build an altar to the unknown God, but it would be piety in us here to erect a monument in memorial of these unknown martyrs, whose names are lost. The best is, God's kalendar is more complete than man's best martyrologies; and their names are written in the^e book of life, who, on earth, are wholly forgotten."

This was the last persecution under the heathen emperors; shortly afterwards Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire, in an evil age, when corruptions of every kind, both in religious and secular affairs, were making ■ rapid and destructive progress; and when the Christian world was disturbed with acrimonious disputes concerning high mysteries, and abstruse points, which the limited intellect of man cannot comprehend, which have been left indefinite by the revealed Word of God, and which for us to attempt to define is equally presumptuous and vain. No records of the British Church during that age are extant; for the existing legends of the British and Irish saints, who are placed in those times, are as little connected with historical truth, as the stories of the Round Table, the romances of Amadis and his descendants, or the ideal state of pastoral Arcadia, as imagined by the poets. Thus much, however, is known, that these islands did not escape the contagious errors which were then prevailing. Monachism, in its first stage, when it had nothing useful or ornamental to compensate for its preposterous austerities, was introduced here; and pilgrims went from hence, not only to visit Jerusalem, whither a pardonable, if not a meritorious, feeling of devotion might lead them, . . . but to behold and reverence, like a living idol, a maniac* in Syria, who, under that burning climate, passed his life upon the top of a lofty column, and vied with the yoguees of India in the folly and perseverance with which he inflicted voluntary torments upon himself. This, too, is known, that the ancient British heathenism was zealously preserved and propagated by the Bards,† and by the remains of the Druids; of whom some taught it in its original state, and others mingled with it some things which they borrowed from Christianity. And it may be presumed that the heathenism of the Romans also still lingered here, though it was not cherished with the same zeal, being unconnected with old remembrances and national feeling, and having never made its way into the northern, nor perhaps into the mountainous parts of the island. This certainly was losing

* Collier, i. 40.

† See Mr Davies's Celtic Researches, and his Mythology of the Druids.

ground; and the old national heathenism was probably gaining it, in proportion as the Roman power declined, and the Caledonian tribes extended their invasion southward, when to repel these invaders the Saxons were invited, and settling in the land as conquerors, introduced with them another system of heathen idolatry.

The Saxons, Angles, and other kindred tribes, to whom we are indebted for the basis and the character of our fine language, and of our invaluable civil institutions, were at the time of their establishment here a ferocious people, but not without noble qualities, apt for instruction, and willing to be instructed. The heathenism which they introduced bears no affinity either to that of the Britons or of the Romans. It is less known than either, because while it subsisted as a living form of belief, the few writers who arose in those illiterate ages were incurious concerning such things: but it has left familiar traces in our daily speech, and in many of those popular customs which in various parts of the country still partially maintain their ground. They had idols wrought in wood, stone, and metals of different kinds, even in gold: . . this fact implies considerable proficiency in art, beyond that to which the ancient Britons had attained. One of these idols was designed as standing upon a fish, others as having many heads; a gross but intelligible mode of representing to the senses of a rude people, that the gods whom they worshipped beheld the actions which were done on all sides. The latter images may be thought to imply by their fashion a Tartaric origin; the former may not improbably be referred through the same channel to India, and perhaps to the corrupted tradition of the Deluge, which seems to have been preserved wherever ancient traditions are found. They had temples, a ritual worship, and a regular priesthood. The rites were bloody. The Saxons on the Continent are known to have decimated their prisoners for sacrifice. But there is some reason to infer, that the priests, when they accompanied the conquerors hither, had attained to that stage of intellectual advancement, wherein it became their wish so to direct their influence as to mitigate, rather than increase, the evils to which their fellow-creatures were liable in an age of violence and incessant war. From the Saxons it is that we derive the holy name of God; its literal meaning was the Good; and we must acknowledge the propriety of that reverential feeling which induced them thus to express goodness and divinity by the same word. The enclosures of their temples were held to be profaned if a lance were thrown into

them : and the priests were not permitted to bear arms, nor to ride like warriors on horseback, . . . only upon mares. When the image of their goddess Hertha, or Mother Earth, was borne abroad in a covered carriage, so long as it continued without the consecrated precincts, all hostilities were suspended, and nothing was thought of but festivity and joy. At the expiration of this festival, which otherwise might seem to have been instituted in favour of humanity, the vehicle, the garment which covered it, and the idol itself, were washed by slaves in a lake which none but the servants of the goddess were allowed to approach, and after this ceremony, the slaves were sacrificed by drowning. They worshipped the Sun and Moon, the Thunderer, and Odin, the favourite god of those who settled in this island, because he was a deified warrior from whom the kings of the different kingdoms of the Heptarchy traced their descent. Of the other objects of their mistaken worship little more than a few names can now be ascertained. That of the goddess Eostre, or Eastre, which may probably be traced to the Astarte of the Phenicians, is retained among us in the word Easter, her annual festival having been superseded by that sacred day.

The change produced in Britain by the Saxon conquest was greater than that which took place in any other part of the Western Empire, when it was broken up, and divided among the Gothic conquerors. Every where else they soon conformed to the religion, and intermingled with the inhabitants, of the conquered provinces, so that a mixed speech presently grew up, retaining more traces of its Roman than of its Barbaric origin. But the Roman tongue, and the Roman religions, the unfashionable and unpatronized rites of its perishing Paganism, as well as the flourishing forms of its corrupted Christianity, were at once swept away from that largest and finest portion of Britain in which the conquerors fixed themselves; and the Saxons established their heathen superstition and their language, without any compromise or commixture. Some mixture of races there must have been, but it was too partial to produce any perceptible effect. This remarkable and singular fact is to be explained by the condition in which they found the island. During the decline of the Roman Empire, then in the last stage of its decay, the Britons had shaken off an authority, which, easy and greatly beneficial as it had proved upon the whole, was insufferable to their national feeling, . . . a stubborn and haughty feeling, but of a noble kind. They succeeded to their own undoing. A deplorable state of anarchy and intestine war ensued, during

which the greater part of those persons who considered the Latin as their mother tongue, . . . in other words, the cultivated part of the population, . . . either fled the country, or were cut off. The Britons themselves were divided into an unknown number of petty kingdoms, and their princes were animated with as much hostility against each other as against the invaders. But they were too high-minded to brook that forced and ignominious incorporation to which the Gauls, and Spaniards, and Italians had submitted ; and gradually retiring to the western peninsula, to the land of Lakes, and to the Highlands of Scotland, their language ceased to be spoken in that great division of the island which now obtained the name of England from its Anglian conquerors. The priests and monks withdrew with them, as well as the less placable votaries of the old Druidical faith ; and Christianity, as a public establishment, disappeared from the kingdoms of the Heptarchy for about an hundred and fifty years.

CHAPTER III.

CONVERSION OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS.

THAT Gregory, who was afterwards raised to the Popedom, and is distinguished from the succeeding Popes of the same name, who like himself obtained the rank of Saint, by the appellation of the Great, was one day led into the market-place at Rome, with a great concourse of persons, to look at a large importation of foreign merchandise, which had just arrived. Among other articles, there were some boys exposed for sale like cattle. There was nothing remarkable in this, for it was the custom every where in that age, and had been so from time immemorial : but he was struck by the appearance of the boys, their fine clear skins, the beauty of their flaxen or golden hair, and their ingenuous countenances ; so that he asked from what country they came ; and when he was told from the island of Britain, where the inhabitants in general were of that complexion and comeliness, he inquired if the people were Christians, and sighed for compassion at hearing that they were in a state of Pagan darkness. Upon asking further, to what particular nation they belonged, of the many among whom that island was divided, and being told that they were Angles, he played upon the word with a compassionate and pious feeling, and said, " Well may they be so called, for they are like Angels, and ought to be made

co-heritors with the Angels in heaven." Then demanding from what province they were brought, the answer was, "From Deira;" and in the same humour he observed, that rightly might this also be said, for *de Dei irâ*, from the wrath of God they were to be delivered. And when he was told that their king was named Ælla, he replied that Hallelujah ought to be sung in his dominions. This trifling sprung from serious feeling, and ended in serious endeavours. From that day the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons became a favourite object with Gregory. He set out from Rome with the intention of going among them as a missionary himself; but the people, by whom he was greatly admired, rose almost in insurrection because of his departure, and by their outcries compelled the Pope to send after him, and recall him;* and when, upon the death of Pelagius, he was elected to the papacy, he took the first opportunity of beginning the good work on which he was intent. Accordingly, he despatched thither forty missionaries from a monastery which he had founded at Rome. When they had proceeded as far as the city of Aix in Provence, the reports which they heard concerning the barbarous kingdoms of the Heptarchy intimidated them so much, that they halted, and deputed Augustine, who was their chief, to return to the Pope, and represent to him the danger of the attempt, and the little probability of succeeding among a ferocious people, whose language they did not understand. But Gregory, in reply, enjoined them to proceed: forasmuch, he said, as it is better not to begin a good work, than to withdraw from it.† He recommended them also to the French bishops, and to the protection of Theodorick and Theodebert, who were then reigning in France; and he sent an agent into that country to redeem Anglo-Saxon youths from slavery, and place them in monasteries, where they might be carefully educated, and

* There is an anecdote relating to this recall, which is worthy of notice, as confirming Gregory's character for a punster, and thereby authenticating that string of puns which must always be remembered in the Ecclesiastical History of England. I give it in the words of his anonymous but contemporary biographer. *Sed antequam missi eum adissent, trium dierum jam confecto itinere, dum idem vir Domini B. Gregorius, ut iter agentibus moris est, circa sextam horam in prato quodam sociis quibusdam quiescentibus, aliis autem illi assistantibus vel necessariis rebus occupatis, sederat et legerat; venit ad eum locusta, et dans saltum, paginæ quam percurrebat incedit; cernensque eam beatus vir Domini*

Gregorius tam mansuetè loco quo assederat permanere, cepit, collectans sodalibus, ipsius nomen reciprocans quasi interpretari; Locusta, inquam, hæc dici potest, quasi loco sta. et subjungens, sciatis, inquit, non progressus nos iter caputem licere pretendere: verumtamen surgite, et jumenta sternite, ut quantum licuerit, quod tendimus properemus. Cum autem hinc mutud confabularentur, et secum quærerent; perverunt missi apostolici equis sudantibus; statimque illi cum magnâ celeritate epistolam, quam detulerant, porrexerunt; quâ perlectâ, Ita est, inquit, socii, ut prædixeram: Romam celerius remeabimus.—ACTA SANCTORUM, Mart. t. iii. 133, 134.

† Beda, l. i. c. 23.

thereby trained to assist in the conversion of their countrymen.

The attempt, which had been represented as so formidable to the missionaries, was in reality free from danger, and political circumstances prepared the way for its success. In the dismembered parts of the great Roman Empire, the northern conquerors were no sooner settled in possession of their dominions, than they adopted the religion of the inhabitants, as they did the other customs which were preferable to their own. This change had taken place in France: at that time there was no rivalry or hostility of feeling between France and Britain; each had war enough at home to employ all its restless and turbulent strength; and neighbourhood, therefore, had led to an amicable intercourse, useful to both countries, but most so to Britain, which had preserved less from the wreck of its Roman civilization. Ethelbert, King of Kent, or Oiscinga,* as the kings of that province were called, from Oisc, the son of Hengist, whom they regarded as the founder of their dynasty, had married Bertha (otherwise named Aldeberga), daughter of Charibert, King of Paris. Her father is reproached for voluptuousness: if that reproach be deserved, which there seems reason to doubt, even his vices would in such an age be favourable to the milder habits of life; but it is certain that he was of a gentle and generous nature, the liberal patron of arts and literature, and distinguished for his proficiency in Latin. Queen Bertha, therefore, when removed to Kent, might sigh for the refinements of her father's court, and wish that they could be introduced at her husband's. The clergy were in that age the only persons by whom improvements could be brought about; the churches and monasteries were the schools of the ornamental arts, as well as of all the learning that existed; and if the Queen had had no other desire than that of refining the manners of her husband, and softening the barbarity of his subjects, that alone would have induced her joyfully to welcome the missionaries on their arrival, and give them all the encouragement and assistance which it was in her power to bestow. But there was also the sense of duty to influence her. It had been stipulated upon her marriage, that she should be allowed the free and public exercise of her religion. She had brought over with her from France a household establishment of clerks, with a prelate, by name Liudhard, at their head; and a church without the walls of Canterbury, built in the time of the Romans, dedicated to a

* Beda, l. ii. c. 5.

certain St Martin, and since the Saxon conquest fallen to decay, had been repaired and fitted up for her use.*

When, therefore, Augustine and his companions landed in the Isle of Thanet, they were sure of the Queen's favour: they came also not as obscure men, unprotected and unaccredited; but with recommendations from the Kings of France, and as messengers from a potentate, whose spiritual authority was acknowledged and obeyed throughout that part of the world, to which the northern nations were accustomed to look as the seat of empire and superior civilization. They made their arrival known to Ethelbert, and requested an audience. The King of Kent, though not altogether ignorant of the nature of his Queen's religion, nor unfavourably disposed towards it, was yet afraid of that miraculous power which the Romish clergy were then believed to possess, and which they were not backward at claiming for themselves. For this reason he would not receive them within the walls of his royal city Canterbury, nor under a roof; but went into the island with his nobles, and took his seat to await them in the open air,† imagining that thus he should be secure from the influence of their spells or incantations. They approached in procession, bearing a silver crucifix, and a portrait of our Saviour upon a banner, adorned with gold, and chanting the litany. The King welcomed them courteously, and ordered them to be seated: after which, Augustine stood up, and through an interpreter, whom he had brought from France, delivered the purport of his mission, in a brief, but well-ordered, and impressive discourse.‡ He was come to the King, and to that kingdom, he said, for their eternal good, a messenger of good tidings; offering to their acceptance perpetual happiness, here and hereafter, if they would accept his words. The Creator and Redeemer had opened the kingdom of heaven to the human race: for God so loved the world that he had sent into it his only Son, as that Son himself testified, to become a man among the children of men, and suffer death upon the cross, in atonement for their sins. That incarnate divinity had been made manifest by innumerable miracles. Christ had stilled the winds and waves, and walked upon the waters: He had healed diseases, and restored the dead to life: finally, He had risen from the dead himself, that we might rise again through him, and had ascended into heaven, that He might receive us there in his glory; and He would come again to judge both the quick and

* Beda, l. ii. c. 26.

† Beda, l. ii. c. 25.

‡ Acta, SS. Mai. t. vi. p. 382.

the dead. "Think not," he proceeded, "O most excellent King, that we are superstitious, because we have come from Rome into thy dominions, for the sake of the salvation of thee and of thy people; we have done this, being constrained by great love: for that which we desire, above all the pomps and delights of this world, is to have our fellow-creatures partakers with ourselves in the kingdom of heaven, and to prevent those from perishing who are capable of being advanced to the fellowship of the Angels. The grace of Christ, and of his Spirit, hath infused this charitable desire into all his ministers; so that, regardless of their own concerns, they should burn for the salvation of all nations, and regarding them as children and brethren, labour to lead them into the ways of eternal peace. This they have done through fire and sword, and every kind of torments and of death; till, through their victorious endeavours, Rome and Greece, the Kings and Princes of the Earth, and the Islands, have rejoiced to acknowledge and worship the Lord God, who is the King of kings. And, at this day, no fear of difficulties, or pain, or death, would deter Gregory, who is now the Father of all Christendom, from coming himself to you, so greatly doth he thirst for your salvation, if it were lawful for him (which it is not) to forsake the care of so many souls committed to his charge. Therefore, he hath deputed us in his stead, that we may shew you the way of light, and open to you the gate of heaven; wherein, if ye do not refuse to renounce your idols and to enter through Christ, ye shall most assuredly live and reign for ever."

The King replied prudently and not unfavourably. Their words and promises, he said, were fair; but what they proposed was new and doubtful, and therefore he could not assent to it, and forsake the belief in which all the English nations had for so long a time lived. Nevertheless, because they had come from such a distant country, for the sake of communicating to him what they thought true and excellent, he would not interfere with their purpose; on the contrary, he would receive them hospitably, and provide for their support.

Augustine and his companions were accordingly entertained in Canterbury, at the King's expense. They officiated in the church which had been repaired for Queen Bertha's use; and it was not long before Ethelbert himself became their convert. After such an example, their success was as rapid as they could desire; for though Ethelbert declared that he would not compel any person to renounce his idols, and profess the new religion, having learnt from his teachers that the service of Christ

must be voluntary, he gave notice, that the converts might expect his favour, as persons who had made themselves co-heritors with him of the kingdom of heaven.

Fortunately for the progress of Christianity, Ethelbert held at this time that pre-eminence over the other kings of the Hephtharchy, which carried with it the title of Brætwalda: his authority was acknowledged as far north as the Humber. This gave him a wider influence than any of the Kings of Kent possessed after him: and, under his protection, the missionaries extended their endeavours into the neighbouring kingdoms. Sebert, his nephew, who reigned in Essex, was the second royal convert. London was the capital of his petty state, and soon after the conversion of its king, Ethelbert (who had previously founded a monastery at Canterbury) built a church there, in honour of the great apostle of the Gentiles, upon a rising ground, where, under the Romans, a temple of Diana had stood; and where successive edifices, each surpassing the former in extent and splendour, have retained the name of St Paul's from that time to this. Redwald, the Uffinga* of East-Anglia (as the kings of that province were called from Redwald's grandfather Uffa), was the third king who professed the new religion. He became a convert when on a visit at the Brætwalda's court; but he was unable to introduce Christianity into his own kingdom on his return, because his wife, and the principal chiefs, adhered obstinately to their old idolatry; compromising, therefore, and perhaps hesitating between the two modes of belief, he set up an altar to Christ in a heathen temple, and mingled Christian prayers* with sacrifices to the Anglian idols. For this he has been severely censured; but if the concession proved that his knowledge was imperfect, and his faith weak, it prepared an easy way for the general reception of Christianity, when an attempt to have forced it upon the country might have ended in his expulsion from the throne. It was now brought face to face with the idolatry of the Heathens; and the people, seeing it admitted to equal credit, were induced to inquire, and to compare, and choose between them. This was a slow, but necessary consequence: one which led to more immediate good incidentally resulted. Edwin, the rightful king of Deira, having been expelled in childhood from his kingdom, by Ethelfrith of Bernicia, was then a fugitive at Redwald's court. Ethelfrith, who had made greater conquests from the Britons than any other of the Anglo-Saxon conquerors, and was confident in his power, and elated

* Beda, l. ii. c. 15. Thomas of Ely in the Acta SS. Jun. t. iv. p. 498.

with success, required Redwald to deliver up the exile, tempting him by three repeated embassies with large offers of silver and gold, and threatening war and destruction if he refused or demurred. The same infirmity of character which had made the Uffinga prevaricate in his religion, now nearly prompted him to the commission of an atrocious crime: moved not by avarice, but by fear, he promised either to put his guest to death, or to expel him. This resolution was taken at night-fall, and immediately communicated to Edwin by a faithful friend, who went to his chamber, called him out of doors, exhorted him to fly, and offered to guide him to a place of safety.

But Edwin would not again encounter the perpetual danger and anxiety of a wandering life. To fly, he said, would be a breach of confidence on his part; he had trusted to the Uffinga Redwald, who, as yet, had offered him no wrong; and if he were to be delivered up, better that it should be by the Uffinga himself than by an ignoble hand. And, indeed, whither could he betake himself, after having, for so many years, in vain sought an asylum through all the provinces of Britain? Resolving, therefore, to abide his fate, whatever it might be, he sate down mournfully upon a stone before the palace, when a venerable person, in a strange habit, is said to have accosted him, and inquired wherefore he was sitting there, and keeping watch at an hour when all other persons were asleep? Edwin, somewhat angrily, replied, that it could be no concern of his whether he chose to pass the night within doors or without. But the stranger made answer, that he knew the cause, and bade him be of good cheer, for Redwald certainly would not betray him; he assured him further, that he should regain his father's throne, and acquire greater power than any of the Anglo-Saxon Princes had possessed before him; and he asked of him, in requital for these happy fore-tidings, that when they should be fulfilled, he would listen to instructions which would then be offered him, and which would lead him into the way of eternal life. This Edwin readily promised: with that the stranger laid his hand upon the head of the royal exile, saying, When this sign shall be repeated, remember what has passed between us now, and perform the word which you have given! And then, according to Bede,* he disappeared. By Catholic writers this is represented as a miraculous appearance; others suppose it to have been a dream; a more possible solution is, that the person in whom Edwin afterwards recognised the gesture and garb of the ap-

* L. ii. c. 12.

partition, may actually have been in Redwald's court, though unknown to him, and that it was a real interview. This might be admitted without difficulty, if it were not that in books which abound with gross and palpable fables, whatever appears fabulous is, with too much appearance of probability, accounted so ; and thus the writers who in one age impose upon the credulous multitude, provoke, in another, too indiscriminate an incredulity.

Redwald's nature was weak, but not evil ; and on this occasion he was saved from guilt and infamy by the brave counsel of his wife. Animated by her he bade defiance to Ethelfrith, marched against him before the Northumbrian had collected the whole of his advancing army, gave him battle on the banks of the river Idel in Nottinghamshire, and defeated and slew him, though with the loss of his own son, Regner, in the battle. Edwin bore a conspicuous part in the victory ; it gave him the united kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia, and it placed Redwald in the rank of Brætwalda, which, after his death, was assumed by Edwin. It led also to more lasting consequences. Edwin sought in marriage Edilburga, or Tata (as she was also called), a princess of Kent, daughter to Ethelbert, and sister to Eadbald, who had succeeded him. The new Oiscinga had cast off Christianity, because he was impatient of its restraints, and had chosen, together with the kingdom, to take unto himself the wife whom his father Ethelbert had wedded after Queen Bertha's death. The three sons of Sebert, his cousins, who had jointly inherited the kingdom of the East Saxons, encouraged by his example, expelled Mellitus, the Bishop of London, because he would not admit them to the communion, while they refused to be baptized ; and they restored the old idolatry in their dominions. Mellitus, therefore, and his companion Justus, repaired to Canterbury, to consult with Laurentius, the successor of Augustine, what might best be done. In their despair of effecting any good while circumstances were so unpropitious, they are said to have resolved upon abandoning the island, and Mellitus and Justus, in pursuance of this resolution, sailed for France. Laurentius gave out that it was his intention to follow them on the morrow, and he ordered his bed to be laid that night in the church of St Peter and St Paul. In the morning he went into the presence of Eadbald, and instead of taking leave on his departure, as was expected, threw off his habit, and exposed to the astonished King his back and shoulders bloody, and waled with stripes. Being asked who had dared maltreat him in that manner, he made answer that the Apostle

Peter had appeared to him during the night, and punished him thus severely for his purpose of abandoning the flock which had been committed to his charge.* It is added that Eadbald was struck with horror and compunction at what he saw and heard ; and in consequence of the effect thus produced upon his mind, he put away his father's widow, received baptism, and prohibited the old Saxon worship, . . . which had been tolerated during Ethelbert's reign, but which, by Eadbald's authority in his own dominions, and his influence over the adjoining kingdom, was from that time for ever abolished in Kent and Essex. This story must be either miracle, or fraud, or fable. Many such there are in the history of the Anglo-Saxon, as of every Romish Church ; and it must be remembered, that when such stories are mere fables, they have for the most part been feigned with the intent of serving the interests of the Romish Church, and promulgated, not as fiction, but as falsehood, with a fraudulent mind. The legend which is here related is probably a wonder of the second class. The clergy of that age thought it allowable to practise upon the ignorance and credulity of a barbarous people, if by such means they might forward the work of their conversion, or induce them, when converted, to lead a more religious life. They may have believed themselves to be acting like parents, who deceive children for their good, when it would be in vain to reason with them. Whether they thought thus or not, it is certain that thus they acted ; and it is not less certain, that a system which admitted of pious fraud, opened a way for the most impious abuses.

Whether Eadbald was, in this instance, the dupe of Laurentius ; or whether, being tired of his step-mother, and perhaps ashamed of his actions, yet more ashamed of exposing himself to the imputation of fickleness and infirmity of purpose, he had concerted with the prelate a scene which might account for, and justify, his sudden change of conduct ; from that time he became a zealous supporter of the new religion ; and when Edwin solicited his sister Edilburga in marriage, objected to giving her to a heathen.† A stipulation, however, was made, as in the case of Queen Bertha, that she should be allowed the free exercise of Christianity for herself and her household ; and Edwin declared that he would not hesitate to embrace that faith himself, if, upon due examination, it should be found holier, and worthier of the Deity, than the service of those gods whom he had hitherto worshipped after the manner of his fathers. When, therefore,

* Beda, l. ii. c. 6.

† Beda, l. ii. c. 9.

the chosen Queen departed for the court of her intended husband, Paulinus, one of the last missionaries whom Gregory had sent to assist Augustine, was raised to the episcopal office on this important occasion, that he might accompany her, in the hope of becoming the Apostle of the Northumbrians. Gregory had selected fit men for the service to which they were appointed. Paulinus, instead of urging the King upon the subject of his meditated change, by which he might have offended and indisposed him, left it to time and opportunity, and the silent operations of his own active and meditative mind; and made it his chief business to preserve Edilburga and her attendants from becoming indifferent to their religion in a land of Heathens. He had thus obtained a character for prudence, as well as for talents, when an attempt to assassinate the King was made by an emissary of Cwichelm, King of Wessex, and Edwin was saved from certain death by the fidelity of one of his Thanes, Lilla by name, who, throwing himself between his royal master and the murderer, received the poisoned short sword in his own body. That same night Edilburga was delivered of a daughter: Edwin returned thanks to his gods* for her favourable delivery. Paulinus was present, and ventured to tell the King, that it was not to those idols, but to the God of the Christians, and his prayers, that he was beholden for this propitious event. The skilful missionary had chosen his time well, while the impression of his providential preservation was fresh, and when the King's heart was softened by the birth of his child. Yielding to these feelings, and to the mother's wishes, he permitted Paulinus to baptize the infant, and twelve of the royal household. The child was named Eanfleda;† (among the Anglo-Saxons, the fashion never obtained of introducing scriptural or religious names); she was the first who received baptism in the kingdom of Northumbria. The King promised also for himself, that if the same God to whom he gave this pledge of his intentions, would preserve him, and favour him with victory in the war which he was about to make on Cwichelm, in vengeance for the late murderous attempt, he also would be baptized.

The expedition was successful, and his vengeance was complete: all who were concerned in the intended assassination were either slain in battle, or delivered into his hands for punish-

* Cressy says, that he intended to sacrifice the child to these idols. I know not on what authority he states it, for, contrary to his usual practice, he has given no reference here. But it is not

mentioned by Bede, and is so inconsistent with Edwin's character, and with the condition of his marriage, that it may safely be rejected as fabulous.

† Bede, l. ii. c. 9.

ment. From that day, Edwin never offered sacrifice to his idols, but he hesitated concerning the new faith; his mind was perplexed and troubled; he was a man of strong understanding, in middle age, when the intellectual faculties are mature, and least liable to be led astray: he conversed often with Paulinus, and with the most intelligent persons of his court, upon the truth of Christianity; and often retired to meditate upon the awful subject in solitude.* At this time, there came letters and presents for him and the Queen, from Pope Boniface, whom Paulinus had made acquainted with the state of his mind. The Pope said to him, that although the wonders of Divine power could never be adequately explained by the words of man, being incomprehensible by human wisdom, it had pleased God, in His mercy, to infuse into mankind a saving knowledge of Himself; and, through the influence of that redeeming mercy, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, were now worshipped as One Trinity, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, all powers and empires being subject to that Holy Name. He held out to him the example of Eadbald, with whom he was allied by marriage; spake of his Queen as one who, by baptism, had been born again, and thereby made heiress to a glorious immortality; and in the earnestness of paternal love, admonished him to cast away his idols, and rejecting their vain worship, and the superstition and deceits of their augurs, to believe in the Father who created, the Son who had redeemed, and the Spirit who would enlighten him. The gods which he had served had neither sense nor power of motion; they were mere images, made by man, and it behoved him to demolish and destroy them. But he possessed a living spirit; and the Pope invited him to the knowledge of that God who had created him, had breathed into him an immortal soul with the breath of life; and had sent his Son to redeem him from the effects of original sin, and from the Powers of Evil, and to reward him with everlasting happiness. In his letter to the Queen, the Holy Father expressed his regret that her husband, who was a part of herself, should still remain in the darkness of Heathenism; and he exhorted her to pray earnestly, and persevere in praying, that they might be joined together in faith as in marriage, that so their union might continue after this perishable life. The presents for the King consisted of a *camisia*, or under garment, with an ornament of gold, and a certain vesture, called *læna anciriana*; those for the Queen were a silver mirror, and an ivory comb, inlaid with gold.†

* Beda, l. ii. c. 9.

† Beda, l. ii. c. 10, 11.

One day, when Edwin had retired alone, as was his manner, to brood over the momentous question which these letters had pressed upon his immediate attention, Paulinus entered the room, and laying his hand upon the King's head, asked him if he remembered that token? Startled at the appeal, as if a spirit were before him, the King fell at his feet. "Behold," said Paulinus, raising him up, "thou hast, through God's favour, escaped from the enemies of whom thou wert in fear! Behold, through God's favour, thou hast recovered thy kingdom, and obtained the pre-eminence which was promised thee! Remember now thine own promise, and observe it; that He who hath elevated thee to this temporal kingdom, may deliver thee also from eternal misery, and take thee to live and reign with Himself eternally in heaven." Edwin,* overcome as if by miracle, hesitated no longer. He called his chiefs to council, that if they could be persuaded to think and believe as he did, they might be baptized at the same time: and when they were assembled, he required them each to deliver his opinion concerning the new religion which was preached among them, and the propriety of receiving it.

Coifi, the Chief Priest of Northumbria, was the first who spake: "As for what the religion is, which is now propounded to us," he said, "O King, see thou to it! For my part, I will assert what I certainly know, that that which we have hitherto held is good for nothing. For among all thy people, there is no one who has given himself more diligently to the worship of our gods than I; and yet many have received greater benefits, and obtained higher dignities, and prospered better in whatever they undertook. But if these gods had possessed any power, they would rather have assisted me, who have endeavoured so carefully to serve them. If, therefore, after due examination, you have perceived that these new things, of which we are told, are better and more efficacious, let us, without delay, hasten to adopt them."†

Another speaker delivered an opinion, more creditable to his disposition and understanding than that which had been given by the Chief Priest: "O King, the present life of man, when considered in relation to that which is to come, may be likened to a sparrow flying through the hall, wherein you and your chiefs and servants are seated at supper, in winter time, . . . the hearth blazing in the centre, and the viands smoking, while without is the storm and rain or snow; the bird flies through, entering at one door, and passing out at the other; he feels not the weather

* Beda, l. ii. c. 12.

† Beda, l. ii. c. 13.

during the little minute that he is within; but after that minute, he returns again to winter, as from winter he came, and is seen no more. Such is the life of man; and of what follows it, or what has preceded it, we are altogether ignorant. Wherefore, if this new doctrine should bring any thing more certain, it well deserves to be followed." The rest of the assembly signified their assent to the change; and it was then proposed by Coifi, that Paulinus should fully explain to them the nature of the new religion which they were called upon to receive. When the prelate had concluded his discourse, the Chief Priest exclaimed, that he had long understood the vanity of their old worship, because the more he sought to discover its truth, the less he found; he proposed, therefore, that the altars and temples of the idols, and the sacred enclosures in which they stood, should be overthrown and burnt. The King demanded of him who ought to set the example of violating them? and the priest himself offered to begin. He asked the King accordingly for arms and for a horse; girt a sword to his side, mounted, and took a lance in his hand. When the people beheld him, they thought that he was seized with madness, because in bearing arms, and riding on a horse, he broke through the prohibitions attached among them to the sacerdotal office. He however rode resolutely towards the temple, and at once desecrated it, by throwing his lance within the enclosure; his companions then, as he exhorted them, set fire to it. The scene of this memorable event was a little east of York, upon the river Derwent, at a place then called Godmunddingaham, the home of the protection of the gods.* The village which now stands upon the site, retains the name, with no other change than that of a convenient abbreviation from five syllables to three, Godmundham.

The new converts acted with indiscreet zeal in thus destroying what appears to have been the most noted place of heathen worship in Northumbria. It had been the wise advice of Gregory † to Mellitus, that the Anglo-Saxon temples should not be demolished; but that he and his fellow-missionaries should cast out and consume the idols, and then purify the buildings themselves with holy water; and erect altars and place relics there, in order that the people might be better disposed to receive the new religion, seeing its rites performed in the fanes which they were wont to frequent. Godmunddingaham having been destroyed, a wooden oratory was hastily erected in York, for the ceremony of the King's baptism, which was performed there on Easter-day,

* Beda, l. ii. c. 13.

† Beda, l. i. c. 30.

A.D. 627. A church, of stone, was immediately commenced upon the same spot, enclosing the oratory. It was conferred upon Paulinus, as his See, and he superintended the building. The King's example was readily followed by the people; and Paulinus is said to have been employed six-and-thirty days,* from morning till evening, in baptizing the multitudes who flocked to him at Yeving. Oratories had not yet been built, nor baptisteries constructed; the converts, therefore, were baptized in rivers by immersion, according to the practice of those ages. The ceremony was performed in the river Glen in Bernicia; and in Deira, where he usually resided with the court, in the Swale, near Catterick.

The influence of Edwin's example was not confined to his own dominions. By his persuasions, Eorpwald, the son and successor of Redwald, established Christianity in East Anglia. But after having obtained an acknowledged ascendancy over all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, Kent alone excepted, . . . after subduing great part of Wales, and the isles of Man and Anglesey, . . . Edwin, while he maintained order through his dominions by means of a vigilant police, and endeavoured to civilise, as well as to convert, his subjects, . . . unhappily fell in a battle against the combined Kings, Cadwallon of Gwynedd, and Penda, who had erected a new Anglo-Saxon kingdom in Mercia. Penda was still a Heathen; but the British King was the more ferocious of the two: he boasted, now that he had defeated the most powerful of the invaders, that he would exterminate the whole race from Britain; and in pursuance of this threat, his army spared neither sex nor age; the common religion which the Northumbrians professed, had no effect in mitigating the inhumanity of the conquerors; and the enormous cruelties which they perpetrated were long remembered with horror. Deira and Bernicia were now again divided, and Paganism was restored in both, by the two sons of Ethelfrith, who ventured to assert a claim to their perilous thrones. Both were slain by the terrible Cadwallon. The Britons now fondly believed that the predictions of their bards were about to be fulfilled, in the recovery of their country by a hero who had been victorious in fourteen great battles and sixty skirmishes; but the last reasonable hope of that fulfilment was destroyed when Cadwallon and the flower of his army were cut off by the Bernicians under Oswald, third son of that Ethelfrith whom Edwin had slain.

During Edwin's reign Oswald and his brothers had found pro-

* Bede, i. ii. c. 14.

tection in Scotland, where Christianity was flourishing, the island of Hy, or Iona, which appears to have been the chief seat of the Druidical superstition in those parts, being then famous for its monastery of Icolmkill, in which many of the arts, and all the learning of that age, were cultivated. The three brothers became Christians during their exile. Oswald was the only sincere convert; he erected the Cross for his standard before the battle in which Cadwallon was slain; and, after the victory, sending for a monk from Icolmkill, he re-established the religion which his brethren had suppressed, and gave him the isle of Lindisfarn for his episcopal seat. By his influence, also, Cyne-gils, the King of Wessex, was induced to receive baptism, and set up the new religion in his dominions. Oswald fell in battle against Penda, and his brother Oswy succeeded to the throne. Penda's son Peada visited the new king, became enamoured of his daughter Alchflæda, and embraced Christianity that he might obtain her for his wife. Through this marriage it was introduced among the Mercians during Penda's life, with his connivance, and established there after his death. By Oswy's interference it was restored in Essex, where it had been supplanted by the old idolatry. Sussex was now the only unconverted kingdom; there it was introduced through the influence of Mercia; and thus, in the course of eighty-two years from the arrival of Augustine and his fellow-missionaries in Kent, Christianity became the religion of all the Anglo-Saxon states.

CHAPTER IV.

CAUSES WHICH PROMOTED THE SUCCESS OF CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE ANGLO-SAXONS.

IN regarding the triumph of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons, a natural inquiry rises why it should have been so easily established, and with so little struggle, seeing that its introduction into heathen countries has in later centuries been found so exceedingly difficult, as at one time to be generally considered hopeless, and almost impossible without a miracle. This striking difference is to be explained by the very different circumstances under which all recent attempts had been undertaken, and the different character of the false faiths against which they were directed.

The Paganism of our Saxon ancestors was not rooted in their history, nor intimately connected with their institutions and manners; it had no hold upon the reason, the imagination, or the feelings of the people. It appealed to no records or inspired founders: in its forms it was poor and unimpressive; there was nothing useful or consolatory in its tenets; and whatever strength it derived from local superstitions was lost by transplantation; for the conquerors, when they settled in Britain, were cut off from those sacred places in their native land which they had regarded with hereditary reverence. Such a religion, without pomp and without pretensions, had nothing which could be opposed to Christianity. On the other hand, the Christian missionaries came with the loftiest claims, and with no mean display of worldly dignity. They appeared not as unprotected, humble, and indigent adventurers, whose sole reliance was upon the compassion of those whom they offered to instruct; but as members of that body by which arts and learning were exclusively possessed, . . . a body enjoying the highest consideration and the highest influence throughout all the Christian kingdoms; they came as accredited messengers from the head of that body, and from that city, which, though no longer the seat of empire, was still the heart of the European world; for wheresoever the Christian religion had extended itself in the west, Rome was already a more sacred name than it had ever been in the height of its power.

The missionaries therefore appeared with a character of superiority, their claim to which was not to be disputed. They spake as men having authority. They appealed to their books for the history of the faith which they taught; and for the truth of its great doctrines they appealed to that inward evidence which the heart of man bears in the sense of its own frailties, and infirmities, and wants. They offered an universal instead of a local religion; a clear and coherent system instead of a mass of unconnected fancies; an assured and unquestionable faith for vague and unsettled notions, which had neither foundation nor support. The errors and fables with which Romish Christianity was debased, in no degree impeded its effect: gross as they were, it is even probable that they rendered it more acceptable to a rude and ignorant people, . . . a people standing as much in need of rites and ceremonies, of tangible forms, and a visible dispensation, as the Jews themselves when the law was promulgated. The missionaries also possessed in themselves a strength beyond what they derived from their cause, and from the adven-

titious circumstances that favoured them. They were the prime spirits of the age, trained in the most perfect school of discipline, steady in purpose, politic in contrivance, little scrupulous concerning the measures which they employed, because they were persuaded that any measures were justifiable if they conduced to bring about the good end which was their aim. This principle led to abominable consequences among their successors, but they themselves had no sinister views; they were men of the loftiest minds, and ennobled by the highest and holiest motives; their sole object in life was to increase the number of the blessed, and extend the kingdom of their Saviour, by communicating to their fellow-creatures the appointed means of salvation; and elevated as they were above all worldly hopes and fears, they were ready to lay down their lives in the performance of this duty, sure by that sacrifice of obtaining crowns in heaven and altars upon earth, as their reward.

Thus excellently qualified for their undertaking, and with these great advantages, the missionaries began their work; not rashly and unadvisedly, but upon a well-concerted system. They addressed themselves to the Kings of the Heptarchy, and when the King was converted, the conversion of the chiefs and of the people followed, as a matter of course. Everything favoured them in this attempt. The Princes who accepted the new faith were thereby qualified to contract matrimonial alliances with the Kings of France, then divided into many kingdoms; an asylum for themselves or their families was thus obtained, in case of those reverses which in such a stage of society are so frequent; and they plainly felt themselves advanced in dignity by professing a religion which at that time distinguished the civilised from the barbarous parts of Europe. If they desired to improve their subjects, to meliorate the state of their kingdoms, and to embellish their courts and capitals, it was by means of the Christian clergy alone that these good ends could be effected. The chiefs perceived their interest in promoting a faith which inculcated upon their dependents the duties of obedience and fidelity; and it could not but be acceptable to the inferior classes, because, while it taught them to expect equal and retributive justice beyond the grave, it required from their lords the practice of humanity and beneficence among the works by aid of which they were to obtain a place in heaven. It is probable, indeed, that the servile part of the population may have been favourably inclined to Christianity, and in some degree prepared for it; for slavery prevailed in the island when the North-men

invaded it, and in a conquest, as in a purchase, the slaves would be transferred with the soil to which they were attached. But the conquerors cared too little about their own idolatry, to interfere with the worship of their slaves. It is likely, therefore, that these persons remembered the religion of their forefathers with some degree of reverential respect; perhaps some of its forms may have been preserved among them, and in consequence, an inclination to assist the Britons in the efforts which, from time to time, were made for recovering their country. It is, therefore, not unlikely, that the Anglo-Saxons perceived some political advantage in a change which bound the labouring part of the people to their lords by a religious tie, and broke the bond between them and their enemies. The Heathen priests seem not, in any instance, to have opposed a determined resistance. Probably the rank and influence which they possessed was inconsiderable; and they nowhere acted as a body. The Jutes, and the Angles, and the Saxons, may have cared little for each other's gods, or have regarded them as inimical; and each may have beheld with satisfaction the overthrow of rival, or of hostile, altars.

The change was beneficial in every way. Hitherto there had been no other field of enterprise than what was offered by war: the Church now opened to aspiring minds a surer way to a higher, and more enviable, and more lasting distinction. The finest and noblest of the human faculties had hitherto lain dormant: they were quickened and developed now, and spirits which would else have been extinguished in inaction, and have passed away from the earth unconscious of their own strength, shone forth in their proper sphere. Whatever knowledge and whatever arts had survived the decay and fall of the Roman Empire, were transplanted hither, with the religion to which they owed their preservation. The inhabitants of Britain were no longer divided from the whole world; they became a part of Christendom. The intellectual intercommunion of nations, such as it was, became in consequence greater at that time than it is now; and it is probable that more English, in proportion to the population of the country, went into Italy in those ages for the purposes of devotion, than have ever in any subsequent age been led thither by curiosity, and fashion, and the desire of improvement.

The Anglo-Saxons were indebted to the missionaries probably for the use of letters, certainly for their first written laws. These were promulgated by Ethelbert,* the first Christian King, with

* Beda, l. ii. c. 5.

the consent of his nobles, and, differing in this respect from the laws of all other Gothic nations, in the vernacular tongue. In the continental kingdoms the laws were given in Latin, because it was the language of the great body of the population, and continued to be that of the law; here the Saxon was preferred, upon the same clear principle, that the laws, which all were bound to obey, ought to be intelligible to all. Latin, however, was made the language of religion; there had been the same reason for this in Italy, and Spain, and France, as for making it the language of the laws; and in England also there was a reason, which, though different, was not less valid. A common language was necessary for the clergy, who considered themselves as belonging less to the particular country in which they happened individually to be born, or stationed, than to their order, and to Christendom; for in those ages Christendom was regarded as something more than a mere name. No modern language was as yet fixed, or reduced to rules, or regarded as a written tongue: of necessity, therefore, Latin, in which the Western Clergy read the Scriptures, and in which the Fathers of the Western Church had composed their works, and the Councils had issued their decrees, was everywhere retained as the natural and professional language of the ministers of religion. They preached, and catechised, and confessed in the common speech of the country; and that the church service was not verbally intelligible to the congregation was, upon their principles, no inconvenience. It was a sacrifice which was offered to the people, not a service in which they were required to join with the lips, and the understanding, and the heart. They understood its general purport; the spectacle impressed them; and the reverent and awful sense of devotion, which was thus produced, was deemed enough.

But if in this respect there was no real disadvantage in the use of a foreign tongue, in other respects many and most important advantages arose from it. The clergy became of necessity a learned body; and to their humble and patient labours we owe the whole history of the middle ages, and the preservation of those works of antiquity, which for the instruction of all after-ages have been preserved. Nor were they the teachers of letters only; from them the ornamental and the useful arts were derived. Church music was introduced at Canterbury, and from thence into the other kingdoms. Churches, which at first, like those at that time existing in Scotland, were constructed of timber, and thatched with reeds, were, in imitation of the conti-

mental temples, built with stone, and covered with lead ; glass for their windows was introduced ; and Church architecture, in the course of a few generations, attained a perfection and a magnificence, which in ancient times have never been surpassed, and which modern ages, with all their wealth, cannot afford to vie with.

The seed had not fallen among thorns, nor upon a hard and sterile soil ; and though some tares were sown with it, the harvests, nevertheless, were for a while abundant. Wherever Christianity has been preached among heathen or barbarous nations, women and old men have been the readiest believers ; the former, because their importance in society and their happiness are so materially promoted by its domestic institutions ; . . . the latter, because, needing its hopes and consolations, and desiring to pass their latter days in repose, they feel the value of a religion which was announced with Peace on Earth, and which, while its kingdom is delayed, imparts to the mind of every individual by whom it is faithfully received, that peace which passeth all understanding. All ranks received the new religion with enthusiasm. Many Kings, weary of the cares and dangers of royalty, or struck with remorse for the crimes by which they had acquired or abused their rank, abdicated their thrones, and retired into monasteries to pass the remainder of their days in tranquillity or penance. Widowed Queens were thankful to find a like asylum. The daughters of royal or noble houses, preferring the hopes of a better world to the precarious enjoyments of this, found in the convent comforts and security, which in those turbulent ages were hardly to be obtained elsewhere : and youths of royal blood, whose enterprising tempers might otherwise have contributed to the misery of their own and of the neighbouring states, embraced a religious life, and went forth as missionaries to convert and civilise the barbarians of Germany and of the North. To the servile part of the community the gospel was indeed tidings of great joy : frequently they were emancipated, either in the first fervour of their owner's conversion, or as an act of atonement and meritorious charity at death. The people in the north of England are described as going out in joyful procession to meet the itinerant priest when they knew of his approach, bending to receive his blessing, and crowding to hear his instructions.* The churches were frequented ; † he who preached at a cross in the open air never wanted an attentive congregation ; and the zeal of the clergy,

* Beda, l. iii. c. 26. p. 79.

† Ibid. l. iv. c. 27. p. 112.

for as yet they were neither corrupted by wealth nor tainted by ambition, was rewarded by general respect and love.

They well deserved their popularity. Wherever monasteries were founded marshes were drained, or woods cleared, and wastes brought into cultivation; the means of subsistence were increased by improved agriculture, and by improved horticulture new comforts were added to life. The humblest as well as the highest pursuits were followed in these great and most beneficial establishments. While part of the members were studying the most inscrutable points of theology, and indulging themselves in logical subtleties of psychological research which foster the presumption of the human mind, instead of convincing it of its weakness, . . . others were employed in teaching babes and children the rudiments of useful knowledge; others as copyists, limners, carvers, workers in wood, and in stone, and in metal, and in trades and manufactures of every kind which the community required.

The enmity between the Britons and Anglo-Saxons was not diminished by the conversion of the latter nation, because that conversion was not, as among the other northern conquerors, derived from the conquered people. It rather, for a time, aggravated the hostile feeling with which the Britons, or Welsh, as they must now be called, regarded the invaders of their country. The Saxons received Christianity with its latest ceremonial additions and doctrinal corruptions.* The Welsh were possessed of purer faith; and it is said that though they had not scrupled to eat and drink with the Pagan Saxons, they refused to hold this communion with them after they became Christians, on the score of their idolatrous religion. In return, they were regarded as having fallen into schism, during the two centuries which had elapsed since the wreck of Roman civilisation in the island. They had, in reality, become more barbarous, because of the unsuccessful wars, which, with few intervals, they waged against the now established conquerors, and the almost continual divi-

* Upon this point Fuller touches with his characteristic felicity. Taking his "farewell of Augustine," this delightful writer says, "He found here a plain religion, (simplicity is the badge of antiquity,) practised by the Britons; living some of them in the contempt, and many more in the ignorance, of worldly vanities. He brought in a religion, spun with a coarser thread, though guarded with a finer trimming; made luscious to the senses with pleasing ceremonies, so that many who could not judge of

the goodness were courted with the gaudiness thereof. We are indebted to God his goodness in movinz Gregory; Gregory's carefulness in sending Augustine; Augustine's forwardness in preaching here; but above all, let us bless God's exceeding great favour, that that doctrine which Augustine planted here but impure, and his successors made worse with watering, is since, by the happy reformation, cleared and refined to the purity of the Scriptures."

sions among themselves ; while, on the other hand, the Saxons, from the time of their conversion, had been progressive in arts and comforts. The Welsh clergy may not, perhaps, have felt their inferiority to their neighbours in learning ; but they were aware of the strength which their order derived from union under one head ; and though there is reason to believe that the Britons had been more connected with the Eastern than the Western Church, they acknowledged, at length, the supremacy of the See of Rome, for the sake of its protection ; conformed to its ceremonies, and gradually received its corruptions.

CHAPTER V.

RELIGION OF THE DANES—THEIR CONVERSION.

MANY years had not elapsed after the full establishment of Christianity throughout the island, before the Danes began their invasions, which they continued from time to time, sometimes being defeated, but more frequently with success ; till, after a long and dreadful contest, they possessed themselves, partly by treaty, partly by conquest, first of a considerable part of the ill-united Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, and ultimately of the throne.

The Danes were of the same race as their northern predecessors in England, but they were far more ferocious than those tribes who conquered the country from the Romans and the Britons ; and their insatiable appetite for war and carnage was inflamed by a wild and fierce mythology. This mythology was founded on the traditionary belief of their predecessors ; but upon that foundation an extraordinary system of fable had been constructed by the Scalds, or poets, who wrought in the old Scandinavian faith a change similar to that which was effected in Jewish theology by the Rabbis, and in the Romish belief by Monks and Friars. Perhaps, like the Bards among the Keltic tribes, the Scalds may have originally belonged to the sacerdotal class. It was their office to record in verse the actions of kings and heroes ; no other histories were preserved by these nations ; for though they possessed an alphabet, their state of ignorance was such that they scarcely applied it to any other use than the imaginary purposes of magic. These historical poems were recited at public ceremonies and at feasts ; they served as war-songs also. This custom, according with other

circumstances, made their chiefs beyond all other men ambitious of military renown; and the Scalds were liberally requited with gifts and honours for that portion of fame which it was in their power, and in theirs only, to award. The authority which they derived from their office as historians may not improbably account for the belief that their mythological fables obtained. Whatever the cause may have been, those fables became the belief of the people, as the theogony of Hesiod and the machinery of the Homeric poems were accredited in Greece.

The accounts which have reached us of their system are of undoubted authenticity; and they are more complete than those of any other barbarous superstition. It acknowledged the patriarchal truth that one Almighty God hath existed for ever, by whom all things were made. Alfader, the universal parent, was the name by which he was known. Long before the earth was made, he formed Niffeheim, or Evil-Home, the abode of the wicked, in the remotest north. Opposite to this, in the remotest south, there existed a fiery region called Muspelsheim, the dominion of a dreadful being, by name Surtur, which is to say, the Black, who held in his hand a burning sword. Between the world of fire and Niffeheim there was a great abyss, into which rivers of venom, rising from a fountain in the middle of hell, rolled and concreted, filling that side of the abyss with incrustated poison, and ice, and cold vapours; beneath which, in the interior, there were whirlwinds and tempests. On the other side, sparks and lightning continually proceeded from the world of Surtur. Thus, there breathed always an icy wind from the north, and a fiery one from the south; in the middle of the abyss, beyond the influence of either, it was light and serene. To the north of this clear calm region the work of creation began. A breath of life went forth, and warmed the cold vapours; they resolved into drops; and by the power of him who governed, the giant Ymir was produced. A male and female sprung from under his arm during his sleep, and a son from his feet, and these begat the race of the Giants of the frost, who multiplied, and were all wicked like Ymir, their father. At the same time that Ymir was produced, the same liquefaction gave birth to the cow Oedumla, by whose milk, which flowed in rivers, the giant Ymir was fed. From the cow there sprung a man gifted with beauty and power; he was the father of Bore; and Bore, marrying the daughter of a giant, begat Odin and his two brethren, between whom and Ymir there was enmity.

These brethren were Gods; they slew Ymir, and the blood which issued from his wounds drowned all the giants of the frost except one wise giant and his family, who escaped in a bark, and perpetuated the race of the giants. The three brethren then dragged the body of Ymir into the midst of the abyss, and of it they made the heaven and the earth. They made the water and the sea of his blood, the mountains of his bones, and the rocks of his teeth; the firmament they made of his skull, and placed four dwarfs, called East, West, North, and South, to support it at the four corners where it rested upon the earth; they tossed into the air his brains, which became clouds, and from his hair they made the herbs of the field. Then they seized fires from Muspelsheim, and placed them in the upper and lower parts of the sky, to enlighten the earth. The earth which they made was round; round about it was the deep sea, and the shores were given to the giants; but they raised a fortress, called Midgard, against the giants, which, with its circumference, surrounds the world; and in the middle of the earth they built Asgard, which is the court of the Gods. There Odin had his palace called Lidskialf, the Terror of the Nations, from whence he beheld all places and all things. He and his brethren one day, as they were walking upon the shore, found two pieces of wood floating upon the waves, and taking them they made of the one a man, and a woman of the other; the man they named Aske, and the woman Emla, and these were the parents of the human race.

But Odin took Frigga, who is the earth, his daughter, to wife and from that marriage the Ases, that is to say, the Gods, proceeded. Their sacred city is in Heaven, under the ash Ydrasil, which is the greatest of all trees, for its roots cover Nifleheim, and its branches spread over the whole earth, and reach above the heavens. The way from heaven to earth is by a bridge, which is the rainbow; and at the end of that bridge Heimdal, the sentinel of the gods, hath his station to watch the giants. He sees an hundred leagues round him by night as well as by day; his hearing is so acute that he hears the wool grow on the sheep's back; and when he sounds his trumpet it is heard throughout all worlds. The souls of all who were slain in battle were received in heaven, in the palace of Odin, called Valhalla, which had five hundred and forty gates. There they passed their lives in continual enjoyment, fighting and cutting each other to pieces every morning, then returning whole to dine upon the boar Serimner, who was hunted and eaten every

day, and restored to life every night that he might be ready for the morrow; their drink was ale out of the skulls of their enemies, or mead, which a she-goat produced every day instead of milk, in quantity sufficient to inebriate them all. But this life of perfect enjoyment was not to endure for ever; for, mighty as the Gods of Valhalla were, they had enemies mighty as themselves, and who were destined to prevail over them at last.

The most remarkable of these was Loke; he was of the race of the giants: handsome in his person, of extraordinary ability and cunning, but wicked and malicious, and of so inconstant a temper, that he often associated with the Gods, and on many occasions extricated them from great danger. This Loke had three dreadful offspring by a giantess. The wolf Fenris was one, the Great Serpent was the second, and Hela, or Death, the third. The Gods knew from many oracles what evils would be brought upon them by this accursed progeny, and to defer a destiny which was not to be averted, Odin sent for them from the country of the Giants. Hela he placed in Nifleheim, and appointed her to govern the nine dolorous worlds, to which all who die of sickness or old age are fated. Grief is her hall, and Famine her table; Hunger her knife, Delay and Slackness her servants, Faintness her porch, and Precipice her gate; Cursing and Howling are her tent, and her bed is Sickness and Pain. The Great Serpent he threw into the middle of the ocean, but there the monster grew till with his length he encompassed the whole globe of the earth. The wolf Fenris they bred up for a while among them, and then by treachery bound him in an enchanted chain, fastened it to a rock, and sunk him deep into the earth. The Gods also imprisoned Loke in a cavern, and suspended a snake over his head, whose venom fell drop by drop upon his face. The deceit and cruelty which the Gods used against this race could not, however, change that order of events which the oracles had foretold. That dreadful time, which is called the Twilight of the Gods, must at length arrive; Loke and the wolf Fenris will then break loose, and, with the Great Serpent, and the Giants of the frost, and Surtur with his fiery sword, and all the powers of Muspelsheim, pass over the bridge of heaven, which will break beneath them. The Gods, and all the heroes of Valhalla, will give them battle. Thor, the strongest of the race of Odin, will slay the Great Serpent, but be himself suffocated by the floods of poison which the monster vomits forth. Loke and Heimdal will kill each other. The wolf Fenris, after devouring the Sun, will devour Odin also, and himself

be rent in pieces by Vidar, the son of Odin; and Surtur, with his fires, will consume the whole world, Gods, heroes, and men perishing in the conflagration. Another and better earth will afterwards arise, another Sun, other Gods, and a happier race of men.

Such is the brief outline of that mythology which is detailed in the Edda. It had grown up in the interval between the Saxon conquest and the first Danish invasions. The deified progenitors of the Anglo-Saxon kings were here converted into beings wholly mythological; and except in their names, there appears to have existed little or no resemblance between the earlier and later religion of these kindred nations. How much of the fabulous superstructure was intended to be believed by those who framed it, or how much was actually believed, cannot at this distance of time be determined. Possibly, as among the Greeks, and as perhaps was the case with many Monkish legends, tales which were invented in mere sport of fancy obtained a credit that had neither been designed nor foreseen, but which was allowed to prevail by those who found advantage in its prevalence. There were some daring spirits who disbelieved such Gods, and openly defied them; but such darings arose from the excess of that ferocious spirit which the system itself produced and fostered; for monstrous as the mythology is, it had a dreadful effect upon the national character.

The nations by which the kingdoms of the Heptarchy were founded were not more cruel in war than the Greeks and Romans in their best ages; but the Danes equalled in cruelty the worst barbarians of Asia or Africa. Under the name of Danes, our old historians include the people of Sweden and Norway, as well as of Zealand and Jutland. Those countries were then divided into numberless petty kingdoms; the population was confined to the coast and the rivers; the habits of the people were wholly piratical, and their institutions were founded upon a system of piracy. For the prevention of civil war, it was their custom that, on the death of a king, one of his sons should be chosen to succeed him, and the rest provided with ships, that they might assume the title of Sea-Kings, and conquer a territory for themselves, or live as freebooters upon the ocean. The Land-Kings themselves made piracy their sport during the summer: and all persons who were able to fit out ships, carried it on under the inferior title of Vikingr. It was their boast that they never slept under a smoky roof, nor drank over a hearth; and they who had accumulated wealth in this course of life, ordered

it to be buried with them, that their sons might not be tempted to desist from the only pursuit which was accounted honourable.

These habits of piracy were rendered more ferocious by the character of their dreadful superstition. To a people who were taught that all who died of age or sickness were doomed to an abode of misery in the world to come, the greatest of all calamities was to die in peace. Men threw themselves from precipices to avoid this evil. A bay in Sweden, surrounded with high rocks, which was one of the places frequented for this purpose, is still called the Hall of Odin, that name having been given it when it was believed to be the entrance to his palace, for those who sought it by a voluntary death. And as their notions of future reward, were not less preposterous than those which they entertained of future punishment, they were even more injurious in effect. When the Vikingr spent the day in carnage, and refreshed themselves by drinking ale and mead out of human skulls, they fancied that they were establishing their claim to the joys of Valhalla, by taking this foretaste of its happiness on earth.

But among men, as among wild beasts, the taste of blood creates the appetite for it, and the appetite for it is strengthened by indulgence. Men who had learnt to delight in the death of their enemies were not contented with inflicting mere death; they craved for the sight of torments. The Spread Eagle of heraldry may perhaps be derived from one of their inhuman practices toward their prisoners. This subject is too horrible to be pursued. Suffice it to record the name of Olver, the Norwegian, who, because he abolished in his company of pirates the custom which was common among them, of tossing infants upon pikes, obtained the name of Barnakall, or the Preserver of Children, an appellation more truly honourable than was ever conferred upon a conqueror.

In societies of the profligate and wicked, there are always some whose miserable ambition is to distinguish themselves by being pre-eminently bad. There were among these atrocious people, a set of men calling themselves Berserkir, whose practice it was, before they went into battle, to madden themselves with rage, and then act like wild beasts in their fury. This state of mind they produced, not by intoxicating drugs, (like the Malays, when they are preparing to *run a muck*,) but by the effort of a strong will, directed to a desperate purpose, over the willing body. Odin is said to have been the first who practised it. The men who affected it were at one time held in honour; but

either they were found dangerous to their companions, or the voluntary paroxysm produced such effects of real insanity, and permanent injury to the over-wrought frame, that it was at length prohibited.

It may well be supposed that the rites of such a people partook the character of their ferocious faith. Some of their ceremonies were obscene, others were bloody. They sacrificed human victims, whose bodies were suspended in the sacred groves. In that at Upsal seventy-two victims were counted at one time. When we consider the real nature of every Pagan idolatry, the loathsome obscenities and revolting cruelties which are found in all, and the direct tendency of all to corrupt and harden the heart, we shall not wonder that the early Christians ascribed to them a diabolical origin, and believed the Gods of the Heathen to be not mere creatures of perverted fancy, but actual Devils, who delighted in thus deluding mankind, and disinheriting them of that eternal happiness whereof they were created capable.

The Danes who settled in England became Christians by position and contact. Alfred, with that wisdom which appeared in all his actions, compelled those whom he subdued to receive baptism. They who established themselves afterwards by conquest in the island, found it politic to receive the religion of the country. The change was no doubt accelerated by propagandists from the Anglo-Saxon Church; but if there had been great zeal or great success in their endeavours, some record of it would have been preserved. The missionaries of that Church were more usefully employed in medicating the bitter waters at their spring. They sowed the seed of Christianity throughout the Scandinavian kingdoms, and many of them watered it with their blood. Their holy efforts were assisted by political events. Charlemagne and Otho the Great provided for the introduction of their religion wherever they extended their conquests. They built abbeys, and established bishoprics, well knowing that by no other means could the improvement of the country, the civilisation of the people, and the security of their states, be so materially promoted. By this policy, by the steady system of the Popes, the admirable zeal of the Benedictines, and by the blessing of God which crowned all, the whole of the Scandinavian nations were converted about the time of the Norman conquest; and thus an end was put to those religions which made war their principle, and, sanctifying the most atrocious and accursed actions, had the misery of mankind for their end. It was from a clear and certain knowledge of this tendency that, by the laws

of* Wihtræd, a sacrifice to the idols was to be punished with confiscation of property, and the pillory; and by the laws of our great† Alfred, with death.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ANGLO-SAXON CHURCH—ST DUNSTAN.

THE church government established in this island by Augustine and his fellow-labourers was that episcopal form which had prevailed among the Britons, and which was derived from the Apostles, in uninterrupted descent. The dioceses were originally of the same extent as the respective kingdoms of the Heptarchy;‡ and in the frequent changes to which those states were subject, the title of King seems to have been assumed by any chief who had a cathedral§ in his dominions. The clergy resided with the Bishop, and itinerated through the diocese, preaching at a cross|| in the open air. There was no public provision for erecting churches and endowing them; these things might in those ages safely be left to individual munificence and piety. Cathedrals and monasteries were built, and lands settled upon them, by royal founders and benefactors: and their estates were augmented by private grants, often given as an atonement for crimes, but unquestionably far more often from the pure impulse of devotion. Beside these endowments, tithes, the institution of which was regarded not as merely political and temporary, but as of moral and perpetual obligation, were paid by those who became Christians, the converts taking upon themselves, with the other obligations of their new religion, this payment, which was universal throughout Christendom. The full predial tithe was intended; The smaller ones were at first voluntary oblations, and the whole was received into a common fund for the¶ fourfold purpose of supporting the clergy, repairing the Church, relieving the poor, and entertaining the pilgrim and the stranger. The distribution was left to the Bishop and his assistants. Such was the practice of the Anglo-Saxon, as it seems to have been of the British, Church.

Long before the kingdoms of the Heptarchy were united, a

* Leges Saxonum, &c., apud Canciani.
t. iv. p. 233.

† Ibid. t. iv. p. 245.

‡ Wharton's Defence of Pluralities, 76.

§ Dugdale's Monasticon, t. i. p. 97.

|| Hodeporicon S. Willibaldi, apud
Canisium, t. ii. p. 107.

¶ Kennett's Case of Impropriation, 14.

perfect union of their churches had been effected, and perfect uniformity established, under the primacy of Canterbury, by the exertions of its seventh Archbishop, Theodore, a native, like St Paul, of Tarsus, in Cilicia. This extraordinary man, whose name ought to be held among us in grateful and respectful remembrance, was appointed to his high station by Pope Vitalian, when, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, he was residing as a lay-brother in a monastery at Rome. He was chosen, because he was well acquainted with France, having twice been employed there, and given proof of his singular abilities; and his advanced age was not considered to be an objection, because his undecayed vigour, and the youthfulness of his spirit, seemed to promise many years of activity and usefulness; an expectation which was well fulfilled, for Theodore lived to be fourscore and eight. He brought with him what was then a large and truly an invaluable library of Greek and Latin books; the works of Homer were among them. He founded a school at Canterbury, the students of which are said by Bede to have been in his time as well versed in Latin and Greek as in their mother tongue; arithmetic, astronomy, and the art of Latin versification were taught there. The fine chanting, which before had been peculiar to Canterbury,* was by him introduced into all our churches. He restricted the bishops and secular clergy to their own dioceses, the monks to their own monasteries; thus establishing due subordination and order, and forbidding that practice of roving which led to the neglect of discipline and the relaxation of morals. He prohibited divorce for any other cause than the one which is allowed by the Gospel; and he procured the first legislative provision for the clergy in these kingdoms, in the form of a kirk-scot, or tax of one Saxon penny upon every house which was worth thirty pence of yearly rent. The payment of tithes had at first been voluntary, though it was considered as a religious obligation. King Ethelwolp, the father of Alfred, subjected the whole kingdom to it by a legislative act. No institution was ever more admirably adapted to its end. It relieved the clergy from the distraction of temporal concerns. It exempted the tenth part of all property from the ordinary course of descent, set it apart, and sanctified it for the support of a body of men, who were not a distinct tribe like the Levites, but were chosen from all ranks of the community for their moral and intellectual qualifications.

The cathedral was at first the only, and long continued to be

* Capgrave, Acta SS. Jan. t. i. 597.

the Mother Church, so called because there it was that believers received their second birth in baptism, the right of baptism and burial appertaining to the Cathedral alone.* The first subordinate houses of worship were Chapels, or Oratories, as humble as the means of the founder, erected by the itinerant clergy, in situations where the numbers and piety of the people, and their distance from the Cathedral, made it desirable that they should be provided with a place for assembling, in a climate where field-worship could not be performed during the greater part of the year. Parochial churches were subsequently founded by those who desired the benefit of a resident Priest for their vassals and themselves; and thus the limits † of the estate became those of the parish. These churches were at first regarded as chapels of ease to the Cathedral, and the officiating minister, as being the Bishop's Curate, was appointed by him, and removable at his pleasure: this dependence was gradually loosened, till at length the Priest was held to possess a legal right in his benefice; and Theodore, to encourage the building of churches, vested the patronage of them in the founder and his heirs. The tithes of the parish were then naturally appropriated to its own church. A certain portion of glebe was added, enough to supply the incumbent with those necessities of life which were not to be purchased in those times, and could not conveniently be received from his parishioners in kind, but not enough to engage him in the business of agriculture; his pursuits, it was justly deemed, ought to be of a higher nature, and his time more worthily employed for himself and others. Without the allotment of a house and glebe, no church could be legally consecrated. The endowment of a full tenth was liberal, but not too large; the greater part of the country was then in forest and waste land, and the quantity of produce nowhere more than was consumed in the immediate vicinity, for agriculture was nowhere pursued in the spirit of trade. The parochial Priest kept a register of his poor parishioners, which he called over at the church door from time to time, and distributed relief to them according to his means and their individual necessities. But in that stage of society the poor were not numerous, except after some visitation of war, in which the minister suffered with his flock; while villanage and domestic slavery existed, pauperism, except from the consequences of hostile inroads, must have been almost unknown. The cost of hospitality was far greater than that of relieving the

* Staveley's Hist. of Churches, 63. Wharton's Defence of Pluralities, 55.

† Kennett's Case of Impropriations, p. 6.

poor. The manse, like the monastery, was placed beside the highway, or on the edge of some wide common, for the convenience of the pilgrim and the stranger.*

The ecclesiastical government was modelled in many respects upon the established forms of civil policy; and as, among the Anglo-Saxons, the tithing-men exercised a salutary superintendence over every ten *frithorhs*, so in the Church, Deans, who were called Urban, or Rural, according as their jurisdiction lay in the city or country, were appointed to superintend a certain number of parishes. At first they were elected by the clergy of the district, subject to the Bishop's approval: the Bishops subsequently assumed the power of appointing and removing them, and sometimes delegated to them an episcopal jurisdiction, in which case they were denominated *Chorepiscopi*, or Rural Bishops. They held monthly Chapters, corresponding to the Courts-Baron, and quarterly ones, which were more fully attended. The clergy of the deanery were bound to attend, and present all irregularities committed in their respective parishes, as also to answer any complaints which might be brought against themselves. At these Chapters, all business which now belongs to the Ecclesiastical Courts was originally transacted, personal suits were adjusted, and wholesome discipline enforced, by suspending the offending clergy from their functions, the laymen from the sacraments. But as society became more complicated, and the hierarchy more ambitious, these ancient and most useful courts were discountenanced, and finally disused.†

The attainments of the clergy, in the first ages of the Anglo-Saxon Church, were very considerable. King Ina sent for Greek masters from Athens; Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherburn, was versed in Hebrew; and Charlemagne was advised by Alcuin to send students from Tours to improve themselves at York. But a great and total degeneracy took place during the latter years of the Heptarchy, and for two generations after the union of its kingdoms. It began from natural causes. In the beginning none but the best and finest spirits engaged in the clerical profession; men who were actuated by the desire of intellectual and spiritual advancement, . . . by the love of God and of their fellow-creatures. But the way of life which they had thus chosen was taken up by their successors for very different motives. Mere worldly views assuredly operated upon a great proportion of them; no other way of life offered so fair a prospect of power

* Kennett's Case of Improvements, p. 16.

† Kennett's Parochial Antiquities, vol. ii. 337-364.

to the ambitious, of security to the prudent, of tranquillity and ease to the easy-minded. Moreover, in the beginning the vital truths of Christianity were in full action, because the clergy were labouring to establish a religion essentially true: after they had succeeded, the gross corruptions with which it was mingled began to work.

These causes of deterioration were inevitable in the order of events; moreover, the location of the parochial clergy upon their cures tended to the dissolution of manners and decay of learning; they were thus removed from superintendence, from the opportunities of learning and improvement, and in great measure from professional restraint. But the Danes brought on a swifter ruin. Their fury fell always upon the monasteries, whither they were attracted by the certainty of finding large booty, and little or no resistance; perhaps also by a hatred of a religion so strongly opposed in all things to their own ferocious faith and abominable actions. There they found not only the church-plate, and the abundant stores of the community, but the moveable wealth of all the surrounding country, brought thither in vain hope of miraculous protection. The annals of those disastrous times record nothing so minutely as the destruction of these extensive edifices, and the slaughter of their unoffending inhabitants. Scholars and teachers, for the monasteries were then the only schools, were indiscriminately massacred; books which were then so rare as to be almost above all price, were consumed in the same flames with the building; and this cause, were there no other, would be sufficient to explain the total decay of learning in the Anglo-Saxon Church.

When Alfred succeeded to the throne, there was not a single priest, south of the Thames, who understood Latin enough to construe his daily prayers, and very few in other parts of the kingdom. The monastic establishments throughout the island had been broken up. As the best means of restoring them he sent for a colony of Monks from France, and their pupils with them, who were training for the same profession. It was not, however, till many years after his death that monachism again began to flourish, through the growing ascendancy of the Benedictine order, and the exertions of Dunstan, one of the most ambitious, and least ambiguous characters in ecclesiastical history. The spirit of that corrupt Church, which enrolled him among her Saints, is manifested no less in the course of his undoubted actions, than in the falsehoods wherewith they have been embellished and set forth; there is, therefore, no individual in

English history whose life more clearly illustrates the age of monastic imposture.

Dunstan was born near Glastonbury, in the reign of Edward the Elder; one of his uncles was Primate, another Bishop of Winchester, and he was remotely allied to the royal family. A short time before his birth, his parents, Heorstan and Cynethryth, were at church on the festival of the Purification, known in this country by the name of Candlemas, because all who attended it carried lighted candles, with which they walked in procession after the service. In the midst of mass, the lamps and tapers were suddenly extinguished; the church, though at mid-day, was filled with a preternatural darkness; and while the whole congregation, in fear and trembling, wondered what this might portend, a fire descended from heaven, and kindled the taper in Cynethryth's hand, thus miraculously foreshowing how great a light should from her be born into the world.*

To this church Dunstan, while yet a child, was taken by his father, to pass the vigil of some great holiday in devotional exercises; and falling asleep, he saw in a vision a venerable old man, with a heavenly countenance, in garments white as snow, who, telling him that building must be enlarged and elevated, led him over it, and measuring the ground with a line, impressed upon his mind ineffaceably the plan and dimensions of the work which he was appointed to accomplish.* Glastonbury was a spot which real history might even then have sanctified to every feeling and imaginative mind; but churches and monasteries had begun to vie with each other in promoting a gainful superstition, by all the arts of falsehood. The probable and undisputed belief that the first church which had been consecrated in Britain was upon this site was not sufficient; already it was established as a traditionary truth, that the edifice had not been built by human hands,† but that Joseph of Arimathea found it miraculously placed there to receive him: and after a lapse of nine centuries, the church itself, though composed of no firmer materials than basket-work, was shown as still existing. St Patrick had chosen it for a place of retirement, and had learnt, from a writing miraculously discovered there, that whosoever should visit the near Tor in honour of St Michael, would obtain thirty years' indulgence; in confirmation of which his left arm was withered, till he made it known that our Lord had chosen that eminence for a place where men might acceptably invoke the Archangel.‡ St

* Osbern, Acta SS. Mai. t. iv. p. 360.

† Ibid. p. 347.

‡ Cressy, b. ii. ch. 3. § 4-9. This author, when he repeats the story,

David came to Glastonbury with the intent of consecrating its church to the Holy Virgin; but our Lord appeared to him in a vision, and told him the ceremony must not be profaned by any man's repeating it, for He himself had long ago performed it to the honour of His Blessed Mother: and then perforating the Bishop's hand with his finger, in proof of the reality of the vision, left him, with an assurance that during mass on the ensuing day the wound should be closed as suddenly as it was inflicted, a promise which did not fail to be fulfilled.* The monastery had been founded by King Ina, whose memory was deservedly honoured in Wessex. A stone oratory had been added, which was dedicated to Christ and St Peter; and St David, because of the increasing number of visitants, built a chapel to the Virgin. There were cemeteries in Ireland which were believed to ensure the salvation of all whose bodies were deposited there; this was too much for common English credulity; nevertheless it was asserted that one who was buried in the sacred ground of Glastonbury could hardly be condemned. It was the undoubted burial-place of Arthur, the hero of British romance, whose monument was respected by a brave enemy; and there was a tradition that Joseph of Arimathea was interred in some unknown spot, deep under the hill, where, according to his own desire, two vessels filled with the real blood of our Saviour were placed in the sepulchre with him; in the fulness of time these precious relics would be discovered, and such numerous and splendid miracles would then be wrought by them, that the whole world would repair thither for devotion.†

The Anglo-Saxon monasteries had never been under any uniform discipline; each followed its own rule, independent of all others. Glastonbury at this time was mostly filled with monks from Ireland; it was favourite ground with them for St Patrick's sake; and as they had no large endowments, they contributed to their own support by educating the children of the nobles. Dunstan was one of their pupils. In such a school local associations would produce and foster ardent enthusiasm, or audacious craft, according to the disposition of the individual. A

assures the reader that the writing in which St Patrick thought fit to give this account to posterity, is approved not only by ancient and modern Catholic authors, but by Protestants also, p. 24.

* Cressy, b. ii. ch. 5. § 2. William of Malmesbury, *Antiq. Glaston.* quoted. "This miracle, says F. Serenus Cressy, is not forgotten nor contemned even by some Protestant writers; though in re-

peating it, they willingly omit the name of mass, which having banished from their own churches, they are loath it should appear of so great antiquity, and which is more considerably dignified by our Lord's mentioning it, and working a wonderful miracle during the celebration of it," p. 26.

† Usser. *Ecc. Ant.* c. 2. p. 9. Brit. p. 28. Cressy, b. iii. ch. 13. § 2. p. 32.

feeble body and a commanding intellect predisposed him for both in turn. He was of diminutive size from his birth, and by severe application to study, brought on a disease, in which, after having been delirious for many days, he was thought to be at the point of death. But feeling at night a sudden excitement as if health was restored, he rose from his bed, and ran towards the church to return thanks for his recovery. The doors were closed, but he found a ladder, left there by workmen who had been repairing the roof; by this he ascended, and in the morning was found asleep in the church, unconscious how he had come there. They who larded the history of his life with miracles, assert, that as he was going there, the Devil beset him with a pack of fiendish dogs, and was driven away by his strenuous exertions; and that angels had borne him down where it was not possible for him to have descended without supernatural assistance.* Divested of such machinery, the fact appears to be, that in an excess of delirium, or perhaps in his sleep, he had got into the church, by some perilous mode of descent, which he would not have attempted in his senses; he himself at the time might easily believe this to be miraculous, and from thenceforth he was regarded as a youth from whom something extraordinary was to be looked for.

As soon as he had attained the requisite age, he entered into minor orders, in conformity to the desire of his parents, and took the clerical habit in the monastery wherein he had been educated. He was now equally remarkable for diligence in his studies, for his various accomplishments, and for manual dexterity; he composed music, he played upon the harp, organ, and cymbals, wrought metals, worked as an artist in wax, wood, ivory, silver, and gold, and excelled in design, in painting, and in calligraphy. The Archbishop, his uncle, introduced him to the palace, where he soon became a favourite with King Athelstan, whom he delighted by his skill in music, and who sometimes employed him in hearing and adjudging causes. There were, however, persons who accused him of studying the historical songs and magical verses of their heathen forefathers, a charge almost as serious as that of heresy in succeeding ages; and an instance of that art which he afterwards practised more successfully was brought against him in proof of the accusation. A noble woman, who intended to embroider some rich vestments as a present for the church, requested Dunstan to trace the pattern for her; he hung his harp upon the wall, while he was

* Osbern, *Acta SS. Mai. t. iv. p. 360.*

thus employed, and the tune and words of a well-known anthem were heard distinctly to proceed from it, although no human hand was near. The matron and her maidens ran out, exclaiming that Dunstan, was wiser than he ought to be; ventriloquism was not suspected, and, as his life was not yet such as might entitle him to perform miracles, the premature trick was ascribed to magic.* He was banished from the court, and men who, for some unexplained cause, hated him, pursued and overtook him, bound him hand and foot, trampled upon him, and threw him into a marsh, leaving him there, as they thought, to perish.

Escaping, however, from this danger, he went to his uncle Elphege, Bishop of Winchester, who advised him to become a monk. Dunstan inclined to prefer a married life; the Prelate upon this is said to have prayed that God would please to correct him in this error, and the young man being soon afflicted with a dangerous disease, took upon himself the obligations of monachism, under the influence of severe pain and the fear of death. He now returned to Glastonbury, and there built for himself a miserable cell against the wall of the monastery, more like a grave than the habitation of a living man. It was five feet long, two and a half wide, and not above four in height, above the ground; but the ground was excavated, so that he could stand upright in it, though it was impossible for him to lie there at full length. The door filled up one side, and the window was in the door. This was his forge and workshop, as well as his dwelling-place, and this was the scene of the most notorious miracle in the monastic history of England; for here it was that the Devil who annoyed him sometimes in the shape of a bear, sometimes of a dog, a serpent, or a fox, came one night in a human form to molest him, while he was working at the forge; and looking in at the window, began to tempt him with wanton conversation. Dunstan, who had not at first recognised his visitor, bore it till he had heated his tongs sufficiently, and then with the red-hot instrument seized him by the nose.† So he is said to have declared to the neighbours, who came in the morning to ask what those horrible cries had been which had startled them from their sleep: and the miraculous story obtained for him the credit which he sought.

A widow of the royal family, who had retired to a cell adjoining the monastery, was advised in her last illness by Dunstan to divest herself of all her property before she died, that the Prince of this world, when she was departing, might find upon

* Osbern, Acta SS. Mai. t. iv. p. 360.

† Osbern, 363.

her nothing of his own. She bestowed the whole upon him; the personals he distributed among the poor, and settled the estates upon the church at Glastonbury, transferring to it also his own ample patrimony which had now devolved upon him. When Edmund succeeded his brother Athelstan, Dunstan was recalled to court, but was again dismissed to his convent, through the influence of those who dreaded his overweening ambition, or disliked his views. The King, narrowly escaping from death in a stag-hunt, in the moment of his danger and deliverance, repented of his conduct towards him; and as this was attended by an immediate profusion of miracles, made him Abbot of Glastonbury, where he then introduced the Benedictine rule, being the first Abbot of that order in England. Edmund also confirmed and enlarged the privileges which former kings, from the days of Cuthred and Ina, had conferred upon this most ancient church, making the town of Glastonbury more free than other places, and granting to its Abbot power, as well in causes known as unknown, in small and in great, above and under the earth, on dry land and in water, in woods and in plains, and inhibiting under God's curse any one, either Bishop, Duke, Prince, or their servants, from entering to exercise authority there. This privilege was written in letters of gold, in a splendid book of the Gospels, which he presented to the church.

After Edmund's death, Dunstan retained the same favour with Edred his successor, who deposited part of the royal deeds and treasures in his monastery, and would have made him Bishop of Crediton. Dunstan, in opposition to the King's wishes and the entreaties of the Queen-mother, declined this promotion, and recommended another person to the see. The motives for his conduct are explained by a vision* which he related to the King on the following morning. St Peter, St Paul, and St Andrew, he said, had appeared to him in the night, and the former had chastised him with a ferule, for having refused to be of their fellowship: they warned him not to commit that sin a second time, nor to refuse the primacy when it should be offered him; and they told him that he must one day travel to Rome. He had resolved upon reforming, or rather re-modelling, the Anglo-Saxon Church, a task for which he was qualified by his rank, his connexions, his influence at court, his great and versatile talents, and more than all, it must be added, by his daring ambition, which scrupled at nothing for the furtherance of its purpose.

* Osbern, 367.

Dunstan would in any age or station have been a remarkable man, but no times could have suited him so well as the dark age of priestcraft in which he flourished. In the decay and dissolution to which human societies and institutions are subject, civilised nations become barbarous, and barbarous ones sink into so savage a state that all remembrance of their former civilisation is lost, scarcely a wreck remaining. This utter degradation is prevented by priestcraft there only where the prevalent superstition is connected with learning and the arts. Christianity, in the days of Dunstan, was as much a system of priestcraft as that which at this day prevails in Hindostan or Tibet; but with this mighty difference, that whereas inquiry can only shew the priest of a false religion, how everything which he teaches and professes to believe is mere imposture or delusion, the Christian minister, even in the darkest times of Popery, might ascertain by strict investigation that the history of his religion is true, and that the divinity of its precepts is proved by their purity, and their perfect adaptation to the nature of man, in its strength and in its weakness. Such as the Romish Church then was, however defiled, it was the salt of the earth, and the sole conservative principle by which Europe was saved from the lowest and most brutal barbarism; and they who exerted themselves to strengthen its power, may have easily believed that they were acting meritoriously, even when their motives were most selfish, and the means to which they resorted most nefarious.

The strength of the Church depended upon its unity, and that upon the supremacy of Rome. To establish and support that supremacy the Popes were in those times encouraging the regular in opposition to the secular clergy; and to effect this they took advantage of a revolution in monachism of which St Benedict, an Italian peasant, had been unconsciously the author. Benedict had formed a rule for the monks under his direction, which, because it was milder and less unreasonable than the manner of life prescribed in any former institutions of the kind, prevailed gradually to the extinction for awhile of all others in the western Church. His monasteries were at first independent of each other; but they soon found the convenience of associating for the better defence of their privileges; and this was favoured by provincial Councils, because the object of preserving discipline was promoted by it, till the Benedictines throughout Christendom became at length members of one body, under one General. Wise Princes encouraged them as the only instructors of youth,

and the best promoters of civilisation. The Popes had a further object in view: the tendency of national churches was to continue independent of the papal power; but the Regulars belonged to their Order, not to their country, and owing their exemption from episcopal jurisdiction to the Popes, they for their own sake supported the Roman see in all its usurpations.

Another great object of the Popes at this time was that of compelling the clergy to celibacy. Nothing in ecclesiastical history is more certain than that no such obligation was imposed during the three first centuries. After that time it was gradually introduced, first by requiring that no person should marry after ordination, then by insisting that married men, when they were ordained, should separate from their wives. This prohibition, for which Scripture affords not the slightest pretext, was long resisted, and was held by the clergy of this country in general disregard when Dunstan undertook the task of reforming the Anglo-Saxon Church. It needed reformation in many respects: the clergy were grossly ignorant, and partook the coarse dissolute manners of their countrymen, which of late years had been greatly worsened by communication with the Danes. Dunstan was supported in his intentions by Odo the Primate. This prelate, who was the son of a Dane, had been a warrior, and even after he was made a Bishop, fought by the side of King Athelstan. When the primacy was offered him, he would not accept it, till he had professed among the Benedictines; and accordingly he went for that purpose to Fleury, then the most celebrated seat and seminary of the order, whither the body of Benedict had been translated. Such Christianity as Odo's had done little to mitigate the stern and unfeeling temper which he derived from his Danish blood: the interests of his order took place with him of the duties of his profession, and he therefore with all his authority assisted Dunstan in the enterprise which he had undertaken. Their object was to make the clergy put away their wives, to establish the Benedictine rule in all the monasteries, expel those secular priests who, according to the old custom, resided with their respective Bishops, and introduce monks in their stead. They proceeded in this with the favour of Edmund, and of his successor Edred, who, because he suffered under a slow and wasting disease, was the more easily governed by these ambitious and haughty churchmen. But a plan which went directly to alter the constitution of the national church, called forth a strong and well-grounded opposition, and their

opponents obtained a temporary triumph after Edred's early death. Edwy the son of Edmund succeeded his uncle at the age of sixteen. He was married to Elgiva, so prematurely were marriages contracted in those times; but as his wife was related to him in what the Romish Church had thought proper in its crooked policy to call a prohibited degree, the followers of that Church who admired the conduct of Dunstan, have represented her as his concubine. Her well-known story is one of the most deeply tragic tales in British history. On the coronation-day the young King after dinner rose from table, and leaving his guests over their cups, went into an inner apartment to his wife and her mother. Such an act of disrespect to his nobles might have been excused in one so young, especially when, through the contagion of Danish manners, a fashion of gross excess in drinking had become so general that it prevailed even at episcopal tables. It gave offence, however; Odo desired that some persons would go and bring the King back to his guests; and Dunstan, with a Bishop his kinsman, was chosen to execute this rude commission, which none of the nobles, displeased as they were, and heated perhaps with drink, were willing to undertake. Instead of persuading him to return by fatherly advice, mildly and prudently offered, they dragged him into the hall by force. Their insolence provoked the spirit which it was intended to subdue. Incensed at it, and by the language which Dunstan had addressed to Elgiva, Edwy deprived him of his honours, confiscated his property, and banished him; and it is said that unless he had embarked in all haste, messengers would have overtaken him, with orders to put out his eyes.

The contemporary author of Dunstan's life, an eye-witness of many of his actions, and probably an instrument in them, has related that on this occasion, when the King's officers were making an inventory of his goods at Glastonbury, the Devil was heard laughing and rejoicing, and that the Saint,* knowing his voice told him not to exult too much, for upon a change of affairs he would be as much cast down. If Dunstan threatened vengeance at his departure, it was in the spirit of a conspirator, not of a prophet. While he retired to Flanders, and found an asylum in the monastery of St Peter's at Ghent, the party which he left in England attacked the young King, first with spiritual arms—never more flagitiously employed—then with open rebellion. The Primate Odo pronounced against him sentence of divorce, sent armed men into the palace to seize Elgiva, branded her face

* Acta SS. Mai. t. iv. p. 354. Osborn, *ibid*, p. 368.

with a red-hot iron for the double purpose of destroying her beauty, and marking her for infamy, and banished her to Ireland. The ministers in this execrable act were less inhuman than their employers; they performed their orders so imperfectly, that when the wounds healed no deformity remained, and Elgiva, escaping from banishment, returned to England to rejoin her husband. She was overtaken at Gloucester by Odo's people, and hamstrung to prevent the possibility of a second escape: the monsters who perpetrated this accursed deed are called the servants of God by the monkish biographer, and the crime itself has been recorded as a meritorious action. The beautiful Elgiva's sufferings were soon terminated by death; and Edwy was prevented from taking vengeance by the revolt of the Northumbrians and Mercians, who, under Odo's sanction, set up his brother Edgar, a boy of thirteen, as King. Dunstan was then recalled, and whatever share he may have had in the previous measures, it is certain that he now contracted the guilt of a full participation in them.

His return was like a triumph. The first promotion which he obtained was to the see of Worcester, and the craft of the monastic party was strikingly exhibited at his consecration. When Odo performed the ceremony he consecrated him Archbishop of Canterbury instead of Bishop of Worcester. One of the by-standers, who was not in the secret, reproved the Primate for this, saying, that it was against the canons to have two Archbishops for the same see at one time; and that he had no authority thus to elect his own successor. But Odo audaciously replied, that what he had done was not his own act; he had spoken under the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost,* Dunstan being destined to succeed him in the primacy as the most redoubted champion against the Prince of this world. There seemed sufficient likelihood that this impudent prediction would bring about its fulfilment, the obvious purpose for which it was intended. Edwy, after struggling three years against the competitor whom these ambitious churchmen had set up, was removed from the contest by a violent death. Nor was it enough for his flagitious enemies to have deprived him of his wife, driven him from his throne, and brought both these illustrious victims to an untimely and miserable end; still further to blacken the memory of this most injured prince, they affirmed that Dunstan had seen a host of Devils rejoicing over his soul as their allotted prey, and that the saint, by his intercession, had rescued

* Osbern, 369.

him from that everlasting damnation to which he must otherwise have been condemned.*

The dominant faction expected now to accomplish all their measures; and as a proof of the ascendancy which they possessed over the king, Dunstan was made Bishop of London, and permitted to hold the see of Worcester at the same time. But upon Odo's death the secular clergy exerted themselves to oppose the further advancement of this intolerant monk; and Elfin of Winchester was by their means promoted to the primacy. They are accused of having effected this by bribes. Elfin had but a short enjoyment of his promotion. On his way to Rome, there to receive his pall, he was lost in the snow in attempting to cross the Alps at a dangerous season; and the monks in their usual spirit represented this fate as a judgment upon him,† for having intruded into a see which it had been revealed that Dunstan should succeed to. The seculars were still powerful enough to prevent the promotion of their dreaded enemy, and Byrthelm, Bishop of Dorchester, was appointed to the vacant diocese. But they could not support him there. Complaints were raised against him that he was remiss in the correction of offences; a phrase, whereby is meant, that he did not compel the clergy to put away their wives. Upon this charge he was sent back to his former see with some disgrace, and Dunstan was then elevated to the authority which he had so long desired over the English Church. He went to Rome, according to the then prevailing custom, and received his pall from the hands of Pope John XII.

The new Archbishop was not sparing of miracles to overawe the people, and prepare them for submitting to his measures with devout obedience. While he was performing his first mass, a dove alighted upon him, and remained during the whole ceremony; in those days the impious assertion was safely made that this was the same dove which had appeared when our Saviour was baptized in the river Jordan.‡ He said of himself, that, whether sleeping or waking, his spirit was always intent upon spiritual things. He affirmed also that he saw in a dream his own mother solemnly§ espoused to the King of Heaven; that all the choirs of Heaven joined in hymns of joy,

* Osbern, 369.

† Osbern even jests upon the manner of his death. "*Gravi inter alpes frigore correptus misere interiit, dignā sibi ultione divinitus recompensatā, ut qui ab amore cœlestium friguisset in corde, per frigoris asperitatem periret in corpore: et qui*

alienos honores ambire præsumpsisset, ipse in aliā regione mortuus, honorem pariter et vitam amitteret." P. 370.

‡ Osbern, 370.

§ Acta SS. Mai. t. iv. p. 356. Osbern, 373.

and that an angel had taught him an anthem upon the occasion ; and he made one of his clerks write down this anthem, and had it performed in his church, as a divine composition. The dream was said to be symbolical, and the mother of Dunstan to typify the Church as by him reformed. So long as Edgar lived, such easy frauds were sufficient for their purpose. That king was wholly in the hands of the monastic party ; they engaged to defend him from the Devil and his angels, and he bound himself to protect them against their earthly opponents. On his part the contract was faithfully performed ; the clergy were driven out, and the Benedictines established everywhere in their stead.

But upon Edgar's death, a vigorous resistance was made. The widowed Queen took part with the clergy ; they were restored by violence in many parts of the kingdom, and in like manner again ejected by Dunstan, who had got possession of the young King Edward. But the wily and unscrupulous Primate perceived that force alone was not to be relied on : a synod, therefore, was convened at Winchester ; and when the advocates of the Secular Clergy appealed to the King, and entreated that they might be restored to their rightful possessions, a voice proceeded from a crucifix * against the wall, saying, " Let it not be ! let it not be ! you have done well, and would do ill to change it." The Saint's antagonists were not so ignorant of the miraculous craft as to be put to silence by a defeat thus brought about. A second council was assembled, without effecting anything. Dunstan took care that the third, which was held at Calne, should prove decisive. The nobles, as well as the heads of both parties, attended. The King was kept away because of his youth, though he had been present at the former meetings. Beornelm, a Scotch Bishop, pleaded the cause of the clergy with great ability ; alleging Scripture in their behalf, and custom ; and arguing upon the morality and reason of the case, against the celibacy to which, by these new laws, they were to be compelled. His speech produced a great effect, and Dunstan did not attempt to answer it ; he had laid aside, says his biographer, all means excepting prayer. " You endeavour," said he, " to overcome me, who am now growing old, and disposed to silence more than contention. I confess that I am unwilling to be overcome ; and I commit the cause of His Church to Christ himself as judge !" No sooner had these words been spoken than the beams and rafters gave way : that part of the floor upon which the clergy and their friends were arranged fell with them, many being

* Osborn, 372.

killed in the fall, and others grievously hurt; but the part where Dunstan and his party had taken their seats remained firm.*

The arch miracle-monger lived ten years to enjoy his victory, and carry into effect his proposed alterations in the Church. His end was worthy of his life; for during those juggling ages, when the chief performers in the Romish Church were no longer able or willing to act wonders for themselves, ready instruments were always at hand to carry on the system of deceit to the last. When his death was approaching, a priest, who, on the eve of Ascension-day, had been keeping vigils in the church, declared he had seen Dunstan seated on his archiepiscopal throne, and dictating laws to the clergy; when, behold, a multitude of Cherubim and Seraphim entered at all the doors, attired in glittering white garments, and wearing crowns of gold. And here, says a Benedictine† historian, the greatness of his sanctity must be observed; they were not any Angels who came to escort him, but those only of the highest orders in the hierarchy of heaven, even Cherubim and Seraphim themselves. They arranged themselves in order before the saint, and addressed him, saying, "Hail, our Dunstan! if thou art ready, come, and enter into our fellowship!" But the saint made answer, "Holy spirits, ye know that upon this day Christ ascended into heaven: it is my duty to refresh the people of God both with words and with the sacrament at this time, and therefore I cannot come to-day." In condescension to his wishes, a further respite than he required was granted, and they promised to return for him on the Saturday.

Accordingly, on Ascension-day, St Dunstan officiated for the last time; he preached upon the mysteries of religion as he had never preached before, such was the fervour with which the prospect of his near glorification inspired him; and when he gave the people his blessing, his countenance became like that of an angel, and was suffused with a splendour, wherein it was apparent that the Holy Spirit was pleased to make its presence visible. He then exhorted them to remember him and his exhortations, for the time of his departure was at hand, and he must no longer abide among them. At this, such lamentations were set up as if the world were at an end, and the day of judgment had begun; and the priest, who hitherto had doubted whether what he had beheld during the night were a vision, or an actual appearance, knew now that it was real, and with tears

* Osborn, 372.

† Yepes, t. v. ff. 123.

and groans related before the congregation all that he had seen and heard. The saint, after taking his last meal, re-entered the church, and fixed upon the spot for his grave. He then went to his bed, and as he lay there, surrounded by his monks, he and the bed whereon he was lying were thrice, by some unseen power, elevated from the floor to the ceiling, and gently* lowered again, while the attendants, as if terrified at the prodigy, and believing that their saint, like Elijah, was to be translated in the body, started from the bed-side, and clung to the walls and door-posts. Saturday came, and the Cherubim and Seraphim, according to their promise, descended to escort him: they were not, indeed, visible to others, but he saw them; and as the monks knew this, the people believed it. "See," says one of his biographers, "how he hath been honoured whom God thought worthy of honour! see in what manner he hath entered into the joy of his Lord, who was found faithful over the talents of doctrine committed to his charge!" The multitude, as they attended his funeral, beat themselves with open hands, and lacerated their faces, a ceremony of heathen mourning which had not yet been abrogated; and the saint was deposited in the cathedral over which he had presided, there to work miracles, and attract pilgrims and devotees to his shrine.

The life of Dunstan is thus given at length, because a more complete exemplar of the monkish character, in its worst form, could not be found: because there is scarcely any other miraculous biography in which the machinery is so apparent, and because it rests upon such testimony, that the Romanists can neither by any subtlety rid themselves of the facts, nor escape from the inevitable inference. The most atrocious parts are matter of authentic history; others, which, though less notorious, authenticate themselves by their consistency, are related by a contemporary monk, who declares that he had witnessed much of what he records, and heard the rest from the disciples of the saint. The miracles at his death are not found in this author, because the manuscript from which his work was printed was imperfect, and broke off at that point: they are found in a writer of the next century, who was precentor of the church at Canterbury, and enjoyed the friendship and confidence of Lanfranc, the first Norman archbishop. Whether, therefore, those miracles were actually performed by the monks, or only averred by them as having been wrought, either in their own sight, or in that of their predecessors, there is the same fraudu-

* Osbern, 375.

lent purpose, the same audacity of imposture; and they remain irrefragable proofs of that system of deceit which the Romish Church carried on everywhere till the time of the Reformation, and still pursues wherever it retains its temporal power or its influence.*

CHAPTER VII.

CORRUPTION OF MANNERS AMONG THE ANGLO-SAXONS—FOREIGN CLERGY INTRODUCED BY THE NORMAN CONQUEST—PROGRESS OF THE PAPAL USURPATIONS.

IF Dunstan had been succeeded by men of similar talents and temper, and England had remained undisturbed by invasions, the priesthood might have obtained as complete an ascendancy as in ancient Egypt, or in Tibet, founded upon deceit, and upheld by uncommunicated knowledge, and unrelenting severity. There might have been some immediate good in the triumph of cunning over force, inasmuch as such a system would have tamed the barbarians whom it subdued; but it would have rendered them as unprogressive as the Chinese, and at a lower stage in civilisation. Time was not allowed for this. The Danes renewed their ravages: the monasteries underwent a second spoliation: Dunstan's immediate successor at Canterbury was put to death by these barbarous invaders: the learning which he had revived was extinguished, and the yoke of his ecclesiastical discipline was thrown off.

The Danes, during their short dominion, conformed to the religion of the country, and the conversion of their native land was completed in consequence. This good arose from a conquest which, in other respects, degraded the English nation. Indeed, they had shewn an unhappy readiness at receiving any imported vices. From the Saxons who frequented England during times of peace, they are said to have learnt manners more ferocious than their own; habits of dissolute effeminacy from the Flemings; and now, from the Danes, excessive gluttony and drunkenness. Such was the general depravity, that the Norman conquest, if considered in its immediate evils, may appear as much a dispensation of Divine justice upon an abandoned people as it proved to be of mercy in its results. Even the forms of Chris-

* This account of St Dunstan's life, with the view here taken of his character, is further elucidated and authenticated in the "*Vindiciæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*,

or Letters to Charles Butler, Esq., comprising Essays on the Romish Religion, and vindicating the Book of the Church," pp. 241-261.

tianity were in danger of being lost through the criminal ignorance of the clergy, who could scarcely stammer out a service which they did not understand : one who had any knowledge of the Latin grammar was regarded as a prodigy of learning. Dunstan would have established an order of things in which the monks, by directing the consciences of the great, should have possessed and exercised the real power ; ■ state not less pernicious had ensued, in which the clergy became the abject menials of the chiefs, and were consequently held in contempt. Such was their degradation, and such the irreverence with which the half-converted barbarians conformed to the religious usages of the age, that the nobles, instead of attending at church, would have matins and mass performed in the chambers where they were in bed with their wives or concubines. The condition of the country accorded in other respects with this sample of its manners. A horrid tyranny was exercised over the peasants ; the lords, for the sake of supplying their own prodigal excesses, seized their goods, and sold their persons to foreign slave-dealers. Girls were kidnapped for this abominable traffic ; and it was common for these petty tyrants to sell their female vassals for prostitution at home, or to foreign traders, even though they were pregnant by themselves. When such actions were so frequent as to become a national reproach, no heavier afflictions could fall upon the nation than its offences deserved.

After the battle of Hastings, William obtained easy possession of the crown. The nobles, for the sake of present safety or advantage, submitted to a foreign Prince, whom, had there been a head to unite them, they might have successfully opposed ; engaging afterwards, as the yoke galled them, in partial insurrections, they were destroyed piecemeal, and their domains transferred to the Norman chiefs. The clergy opposed him with a more determined spirit of resistance ; and the Conqueror found their enmity so inveterate, that he made an ordinance for excluding the native monks and priests from all dignities in the Church. So strictly was it observed, and so extensive was the compulsory transfer of property which ensued upon the conquest, that in the course of the next generation, among all the Bishops, Abbots, and Earls of the realm, not one was to be found of English birth. To accelerate this object William deprived many prelates of their sees, and appointed foreigners in their stead. Some fled into Scotland, deeming their persons in danger ; and matter of accusation was easily found against others, in the part which they had taken, or in the relaxed morals which

had infected all ranks during the late distempered times. Stigand the Primate was one of those who were thus deposed; the real cause of his removal was that he had refused to crown the Conqueror, and had taken an honourable part in exciting the men of Kent to demand and obtain a confirmation of their customs. Lanfranc, Abbot of St Stephen's at Caen, an Italian by birth, was the person whom William selected to succeed him. A man more eminent for talents and learning could not have been found; but being either unwilling to remove to a turbulent country, or apprehensive that he might be called upon to contend with a prince who was resolute in his purposes as well as politic, he pleaded his ignorance* of the language and of the barbarous people as a reason for wishing to decline the promotion. Yielding, however, to the king's wishes, he at length accepted it; and one of his first measures was to give the further sanction of the Church to the new government, by imposing, at a council held under his directions, certain penances upon those who had killed or wounded any of William's men at the battle of Hastings; the archers were enjoined to fast three Lents, because as none could tell what execution had been done by his arrows, it behoved all to consider themselves guilty; but a commutation was permitted in money, or by building or repairing churches.

In further condescension to William's system, he proceeded to deprive Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester, for insufficiency in learning, and for his ignorance of the French tongue; for even this, in the insolence of iniquitous power, was deemed a sufficient cause. Wulstan was a man who had escaped the contagion of those dissolute times. His habits were simple, his life exemplary, his character decided; and on this urgent occasion he was not wanting to himself. The synod before which he was summoned was held in Westminster Abbey, and Lanfranc there called upon him to deliver up his pastoral staff. Upon this the old man rose, and holding the crosier firmly in his hand, replied, "I know, my Lord Archbishop, that of a truth I am not worthy of this dignity, nor sufficient for its duties. I knew it when the clergy elected, when the prelates compelled, when my master summoned me to the office. He, by authority of the apostolic see, laid this burthen upon my shoulders, and with this staff ordered me to be invested with the episcopal degree. You now require from me the pastoral staff which you did not deliver, and take from me the office which you did not confer: and I,

* Milo Crispinus. *Acta Sanctorum*, Maii, t. vi. 839.

who am not ignorant of my own insufficiency, obeying the decree of this holy Synod, resign them, not to you, but to him by whose authority I received them!" So saying, he advanced to the tomb of King Edward the Confessor, and addressed himself to the dead: "Master," said he, "thou knowest how unwillingly I took upon myself this charge, forced to it by thee! for although neither the choice of the brethren, nor the desire of the people, nor the consent of the prelates, nor the favour of the nobles, was wanting, thy pleasure predominated more than all, and especially compelled me. Behold a new King, a new law, a new Primate! they decree new rights, and promulgate new statutes. Thee they accuse of error in having so commanded; me of presumption in having obeyed. Then indeed thou wert liable to error, being mortal; but now, being with God, thou canst not err! Not therefore to these, who require what they did not give, and who, as men, may deceive and be deceived, but to thee who hast given, and who art beyond the reach of error or ignorance, I render up my staff! to thee I resign the care of those whom thou hast committed to my charge!" With that he laid his crosier upon the tomb, and took his seat as a simple monk among the monks.

The solemnity of such an appeal, from a venerable old man, might well induce the Synod to desist from its injurious purpose: but it is affirmed, that where he deposited the crosier there it remained, fast* imbedded in the stone, and that in deference to this miraculous manifestation, he was permitted to retain his see. If the miracle were reported at the time, it was probably used by Lanfranc as a means for inducing William to let the proceedings cease, and saving him from the appearance of being foiled in his intent. Like most churchmen of those ages, Lanfranc, though a great, and in many respects a meritorious man, was not scrupulous in the use of such arts. There were other things wherein he conformed to the spirit of his church in the worst parts of that audacious system which was about his time matured. He promoted its favourite object of imposing celibacy upon the clergy, by procuring a decree that no priest should take a wife, nor any married man be ordained; more than this could not then be effected, and the married clergy were still numerous and powerful enough to avert the separation which the Pope would fain have enforced. He was also a zealous advocate for transubstantiation, which prodigious dogma had hardly been heard of in this island before his time.

* *Acta Sanctorum*, Jan. t. ii. 247.

Under a weak prince Lanfranc might have borne a distinguished part, in furthering the usurpations of the Romish see; he had to deal with one who was able and resolute, as well as violent, and their knowledge of each other served as a salutary restraint upon both. With the view of strengthening an invalid title to the succession, William had solicited the Pope's approbation of his claim, and had displayed a consecrated banner at the battle of Hastings. But when Gregory VII. (the memorable Hildebrand) afterwards required in return that he should do fealty for the crown of England, and take better care for the payment of the money which his predecessors were wont to send to Rome, he promised to remit the arrears, but refused the fealty, because he had never engaged to perform it, nor had it ever been done by the Kings of England before him. Amid all the difficulties and dangers that beset his throne, William would not abate one jot of his rights in deference even to the imperious Hildebrand. He forbade the clergy to go out of the kingdom, or to acknowledge a Pope, or to excommunicate a noble without his permission, or to publish any letters from Rome till he should have approved them. He separated the ecclesiastical from the civil courts, with which they had hitherto been conjoined. And he deprived the clergy of many of their lands, and subjected the rest to military service.

These measures, some of which were in themselves injurious, and all in direct opposition to the pretensions of the papacy, could not easily be brooked by the Primate; and at one time Lanfranc felt so severely the difficulties wherewith he had to contend, that he entreated the Pope to release him from a situation which made his life a burthen. By yielding, however, sometimes where resistance would have been vain, he was enabled at others to defend the rights of the clergy, and of the people; and when William's half brother Odo usurped and annexed to his own possessions five and twenty manors belonging to the Church of Canterbury, Lanfranc appealed to the laws, and after a public trial, on Pinnendon Heath, recovered them, to the great joy and * benefit of the tenants, who thus continued under the easiest and most liberal of all tenures. William had that high respect for his integrity, that when he went beyond sea he left him sole Justiciary of the kingdom. The favour which he possessed had not been acquired by servile acquiescence to the King's will, nor any other unworthy means. One day when a minstrel exclaimed, as William sate at table in his court in a

* *Acta Sanctorum*, Maii, t. vi. 841.

dress resplendent with gold and jewels, that he beheld a visible God, Lanfranc called upon the King not to permit such blasphemous adulation, and the flatterer accordingly was punished with stripes instead of receiving the reward which he expected.*

Lanfranc rebuilt Canterbury Cathedral with stone from the fine † quarries near Caen; he founded also two hospices without the city walls, and erected stone mansions for himself on most of his estates. His revenues enabled him to make this princely expenditure, while he annually bestowed in alms £500, ‡ a sum equivalent to full twelve times the amount in these days. His benevolence towards the monks of his own Church extended to their relations, none of whom he suffered to be distressed by want. Under his primacy no promotion in the Church was to be obtained by purchase, neither was any unfit person raised to the episcopal rank. And by his influence with the King, the trade in slaves, who were sold to Ireland, was prohibited; for though good old Wulstan was the first who raised his voice against this iniquity, the King would hardly have relinquished the great profit which accrued to him from it without Lanfranc's interference. §

Two objects of considerable importance were effected during this primacy. One was the removal of episcopal sees from those places which had fallen to decay, into prosperous and growing towns: the other was the establishment of one liturgy throughout the kingdom. This uniformity was brought about in consequence of a scandalous fray at Glastonbury. Thurstan, the Norman Abbot, chose to introduce a service there which the monks opposed; he brought armed men to support his authority; the monks defended themselves with whatever was at hand, forms, candlesticks, even the crucifix itself, till eight were wounded, and two killed upon the steps of the high altar. Both parties having been culpable in this unpardonable transaction, the Abbot was sent back to Normandy, and the monks distributed in different convents; and that no further disputes might arise from the same cause, a service was compiled by Osmund Bishop of Salisbury, and introduced into all the churches. ||

It is to be regretted that Lanfranc, to whom England is beholden for the restoration of letters, and who was indeed the light of his age, should so far have partaken the spirit of the Romish Church, as to abet its fraudulent arts, if not actually to

* Acta Sanctorum, Maii, t. vi. 846.

† Ibid. 841.

‡ William of Malmsbury, Sharpe's translation, 342-345.

§ Ibid. 345.

|| Fuller, b. iii. p. 8. § 23.

practise them himself. When his cathedral was rebuilt, he removed the body of Dunstan with all solemnity; it was a becoming act; but he ordered Osbern,* the lying biographer of that arch-deceiver, to preach upon his miracles; and the more to honour the translation, a devil was cast out of a possessed monk, with as many plain circumstances of † imposture as ever were apparent in any such exhibition. An artifice, proceeding from the same system of deceit, was either devised or encouraged by him to bring about the election of one whom he approved for his successor. Anselm, Abbot of Bec, in Normandy, the person whom he thought best fitted to uphold the interests of the church, had come to visit Lanfranc; returning to rest one night after matins, he found a gold ring in the bed, and suspecting, it is said, at first, that the Devil might have some concern in putting it there, he made a cross upon it before he ventured to take it up. No one in the monastery owned the ring, and Anselm therefore ordered it to be sold for the benefit of the house; but Lanfranc, when the circumstance was told him, remarked, that Anselm was certainly destined to succeed him in the primacy. ‡

The pretensions of the Roman Church had at this time been carried to their highest pitch by Gregory VII., one of those restless spirits who obtain an opprobrious renown in history for disturbing the age in which they live. The Romanists themselves acknowledge now the inordinate ambition of this haughty Pontiff, who may be deemed the founder of the papal dominion; but during many centuries he was held up as an object of admiration to the Christian world, and still holds his place as a saint in the Romish Calendar. His sanctity, the legends of that Church§ relate, was prefigured in childhood, by sparks proceeding from his garments, and by a lambent light which appeared to issue from his head. He himself affirmed that, in a dream, there went forth fire from his mouth, and set the world in flames; and his enemies, who vilified him as a sorcerer, admitted that such a vision was appropriate to one who was indeed a firebrand. Another of his dreams|| was, that he saw St Paul clearing out dung from his church, wherein cattle had taken shelter, and calling upon him to assist him in the work; and certain persons who were keeping vigils in St Peter's Church, beheld, in a waking vision, ¶ St Peter and Hildebrand labouring at the same task. By such artifices his reputation for sanctity was established

* Acta SS. Maii, t. vi. p. 832.

† Acta Sanctorum, Maii, t. vii. p. 813.

‡ Ibid. t. vi. p. 847.

§ Ibid. p. 113.

|| Ibid. p. 114.

¶ Ibid. p. 114.

among the people, while he obtained promotion for his activity and talents; till at length, rather by intrigue and popular outcry than by canonical election, he was chosen Pope. Hitherto the Popes had recognised the supremacy of the Emperors, by notifying to them their election before they were consecrated, and having that ceremony performed in the presence of an imperial envoy. Hildebrand conformed to this, being conscious that his elevation was informal, and glad to have it thus ratified. The use he made of the power which he had thus obtained was to throw off all dependence upon the temporal authority, and establish a system, whereby Rome should again become the mistress of the world. A grander scheme never was devised by human ambition; and wild as it may appear, it was, at that time, in many points so beneficial, that the most upright men might conscientiously have laboured to advance it. Whether the desire of benefiting mankind had any place among the early impulses of Hildebrand, may well be doubted, upon the most impartial consideration of his conduct; but in preparing the way for an intolerable tyranny, and for the worst of all abuses, he began by reforming abuses, and vindicating legal rights.

Throughout Christendom the church had been so liberally endowed, that its wealth at once endangered and corrupted it. Monasteries and Cathedrals were frequently despoiled of their lands. Lanfranc had successfully resisted an usurpation of this kind; and Hildebrand boldly began by threatening the King of France with ecclesiastical censures, if such injustice were not redressed in that kingdom. Sees were kept vacant, that the Kings might enjoy their revenues; they were disposed of by purchase so commonly, that simony became the characteristic sin of the age: in all such cases they passed into unworthy hands; and even when they were not sold, equal, or greater evil resulted, if they were given, for favour or consanguinity, to subjects who disgraced the profession by their ignorance and their habits of life. To prevent such abuses, Hildebrand claimed the right of investiture, which Princes had hitherto exercised as their undisputed prerogative. In the first of these measures he was clearly justified. The second was a questionable point; yet, on the whole, it may appear that the power might best be entrusted to the spiritual head of Christendom. But when he proceeded to anathematise all who should receive investiture from lay-hands, and all lay-men who should confer it, that measure manifested an assumption of temporal authority, which, if it were once established, must render all Sovereigns

dependent upon the Pope. And this conclusion, the intrepid Hildebrand loudly proclaimed. His language was, that if Kings presumed to disobey the edicts of the apostolic See, they were cut off from participating in the body and blood of Christ, and forfeited their dignities. For if that See had power to determine and judge in things celestial and spiritual, how much more in things earthly and secular! The Church, he affirmed, had power to give or take away all empires, kingdoms, duchies, principalities, marquisesates, counties, and possessions of all men whatsoever.

Had the authority which the Pope thus arrogated appeared as monstrous then as it does now, the claim could not have been advanced with any likelihood of establishing it. But what is now understood by constitutional rights, had no existence in those days. A power unlimited by any laws, was everywhere vested in the Sovereigns, and the Pontiff only arrogated over them, by a pretended right divine, that authority which they exercised over others originally by right of the sword. Were it, indeed, as possible to realise the fair ideal of a Christian Pope, as of a patriot King, such authority might more beneficially be trusted to a spiritual than to a secular autocrat. But the system of the Papal Church was anything rather than Christianity; and the papal court, at the time when it advanced its loftiest pretensions, was the most scandalous in Christendom. The usurpation was resisted for awhile as boldly as it was attempted. Even among the clergy themselves, a strong party was found who, for motives worthy and unworthy, sided with the Emperor in the struggle; many for the sake of retaining the preferment which they had obtained by simoniacal means, the great body because the determination of compelling them to celibacy was now rigorously pursued. On the other hand, Hildebrand found partisans in the Empire. The dreadful war between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, by which Germany and Italy were so long convulsed, was thus begun. A rival Pope was set up on one side, a rival Emperor on the other: both parties proceeded with equal violence and with alternate success. But the papal party acted upon a matured system, which a succession of men, raised for their abilities and devoted to the cause, steadily carried on: there was neither weakness nor vacillation in their councils, and they profited by every opportunity which feeble or rash princes afforded them.

The struggle between the spiritual and temporal authorities did not extend to England during the life of William the Con-

queror: Hildebrand was wholly occupied in his contest with the Emperor, and Lanfranc best promoted the interests of the church, by avoiding all disputes with a King of his decided temper. The same conciliatory prudence enabled him to live upon fair terms with William Rufus, and even to exercise a controlling influence over his irregular mind. But upon Lanfranc's death, the Red King restrained himself no longer: to supply the expenditure of his excesses, as Abbacies and Prelacies fell, he kept them vacant, and by a system like that of rack-rent, drew from the helpless tenants all that it was possible to extort. The ample revenues of Canterbury were thus perverted for nearly five years, nor would the repeated entreaties of the clergy then have prevailed upon him to nominate a primate, if a dangerous illness had not awakened in him some fear of what might follow after death. Under that fear he appointed Anselm, partly perhaps in deference to what had been Lanfranc's wish, and partly as thinking him a person who would not offer any determined opposition to his will. Anselm, like his predecessor, would have refused the undesirable promotion; "the Church of England," he said, "was a plough which ought to be drawn by two oxen of equal strength; would they then yoke him to it, an old feeble sheep, with a wild bull?" He characterised himself untruly; for whatever his individual disposition might have been, his conduct was in full conformity with the aspiring views of his church.

There were at this time two Popes, each excommunicating the other with all his adherents. England had not yet made its choice between them; but Anselm, in defiance or in ignorance of the late king's law, had acknowledged Hildebrand's successor, and now demanded leave to go and receive the pall from him at Rome. Rufus, already exasperated by the proper firmness, with which the Archbishop had called upon him to fill up the vacant benefices, took advantage of this, and accused him before the Great Council of having broken his fealty and disobeyed the laws. The case was plain, and the Bishops declared that unless he retracted his submission to Pope Urban, they would not obey him as their Primate. Obedience was not to be obtained from Anselm, and the Bishops, when Rufus called upon them to depose him, replied that it was beyond their power. The proceedings, therefore, were suspended; and as the King soon afterwards thought proper to recognise the same Pope, that cause of dispute was removed, and the pall was sent to Anselm. But the reconciliation was of short continuance. The manner in which Rufus continued to wrong the church, called for interference on the

Primate's part, and this again provoked the irascible King; and when Anselm, after having been twice refused, persisted in requesting leave to visit Rome, he was told, that if he went, his possessions should be sequestered, and he should never be allowed to return.

To Rome, however, he went, and was received with all the honours due to a Confessor in the Church's cause. The Pope lodged him in his own palace, and ordered that the English who came to that city should kiss his toe. He wrote also to William, commanding him to restore the Archbishop's property; but the resolute King had no sooner been informed that the bearer of this letter was one of Anselm's servants, than he swore that he would pull out his eyes if he did not immediately leave England. The matter was laid before the Council of Bari, at that time assembled; and the Pope represented to them the irreligious life of the Tyrant, as he styled him, according to the complaints against him which had repeatedly been preferred; exhortations and menaces, he said, had often been tried, but with what effect might be seen in the expulsion of a man like Anselm; what then remained to be done? The Council replied that he should be smitten with an anathema by the sword of St Peter; and the Pope would instantly have fulminated the sentence, if Anselm had not on his knees interposed, and prevailed upon him yet a little longer to refrain.

But though in this instance Anselm moderated the proceedings of the Council, he entered heartily into the feelings of that assembly when the question of investiture was brought forward; and excommunication was denounced by acclamation against all who should do homage to a layman for ecclesiastical honours. It was too execrable, they said, that hands which could create* the Creator, and offer him to the Father as a redeeming sacrifice, should become the servants of those which were continually polluted with impure contacts, with rapine, and with blood. Rufus, who like his father was a man of strong intellect and dauntless resolution, cared little for this while it excited no opposition to him at home. He perceived the impolicy of quarrelling with a power, which was not to be met in the field and opposed with arms: at the same time he was determined not to yield to it by inviting Anselm back. A middle course suited the views of one who cared so little for the future; and he negotiated a sort of suspension with the Pope, which left the matter as it stood during the remainder of his reign.

* Eadmer, *Acta Sanctorum*, Apr. t. ii. p. 919.

Rufus had succeeded to the English throne, in exclusion of an elder brother, upon the ground of his father's appointment. Henry, who obtained possession of it now, had no such plea; he found it expedient, therefore, to conciliate the clergy as well as the people. And in the charter of liberties with which he began his reign, he promised neither to sell, let, or retain benefices, and to restore its old immunities to the Church. The Primate was of course invited back, and was received with every mark of respect and honour. But when he was required to do homage for the possessions of his see, he declared that the late canons rendered this impossible, and that if the King persisted in demanding it, he must again quit the kingdom. Upon this, Henry, who at that time could ill dispense with the services of so important a personage, proposed that the matter should be referred to the Pope: Anselm unwillingly consented to a measure which he well knew could only create delay; but in Henry's situation delay was of great moment. . . . The messengers returned with an answer, in which the Pope insisted on his point, and supported it by the strangest distortion of Scripture: "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved." "He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." "If Kings," said the Pope, "take upon themselves to be the door of the Church, whosoever enter by them become thieves and robbers, not shepherds. Palaces belong to the Emperor, Churches to the Priest; and it is written, 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' How shameful is it for the Mother to be polluted in adultery by her sons! If therefore, O King, thou art a son of the Church, as every Catholic Christian is, allow thy Mother a lawful marriage, that the Church may be wedded to a legitimate husband, not by man but by Christ. . . . It is monstrous for a son to beget his father, a man to create his God: and that Priests are called Gods, as being the Vicars of Christ, is manifest in Scripture."

Such arguments were more likely to incense than satisfy a prince of Henry Beauclerc's understanding. He commanded Anselm either to do homage or leave the kingdom, and Anselm with equal firmness replied that he would do neither. A second reference to Rome ensued: two monks were deputed thither by the Primate, three Bishops by the King. The Pope upon this occasion acted with consummate duplicity, for which the motive is not apparent. To the Bishops he said, that as their King was in other respects so excellent a Prince, he would consent to

his granting investitures ; but he would not send him a written concession, lest it might come to the knowledge of other princes, and they should thereby be encouraged to despise the Papal authority. By the monks he sent letters to Anselm, exhorting him to persist in his refusal. Both parties made their report before the Great Council of the realm ; the Prelates solemnly asseverating that they faithfully repeated what had passed between them and the Pope, the monks producing their letters. On the one part, it was contended that oral testimony might not be admitted against written documents ; on the other, that the solemn declaration of three Prelates ought to outweigh the words of two monks and a sheet of sheep's skin with a leaden seal.* . . . To this it was replied, that the Gospel itself was contained in skins of parchment. If, however, it was not easy to determine what had been the real decision of the Pontiff, his double-dealing was palpable ; and Anselm may have been influenced by a proper feeling of indignation, when he so far conceded to the King as no longer to refuse communion with those Bishops who had received investiture from his hands. At length, by Henry's desire, Anselm went to Rome to negotiate there in person ; and the matter ended in a compromise, that no layman should invest by delivery of the ring and crosier, but that Prelates should perform homage for their temporalities.

During these disputes no council had been held in England, and therefore a great decay of discipline was complained of. The marriage of the clergy was what Anselm regarded as the most intolerable of all abuses. This real abuse had grown out of it, that the son succeeded by inheritance to his father's church ; a custom which, if it had taken root, would have formed the clergy into a separate cast. This, therefore, was justly prohibited ; but it was found necessary to dispense with a canon which forbade the ordination or promotion of the sons of priests, because it appeared that the best qualified and greater part of the clergy were in that predicament. Canons, each severer than the last, were now enacted for the purpose of compelling them to celibacy. Married priests were required immediately to put away their wives, and never to see or speak to them, except in cases of urgent necessity and in the presence of witnesses. They who disobeyed were to be excommunicated, their goods forfeited, and their wives reduced to servitude, as slaves to the Bishop of the diocese.† The wife of a priest was to be banished from the parish in which her husband resided, and condemned to slavery

* Collier, i. 286.

† Henry, vol. iii. p. 208. Dublin edition.

if she ever held any intercourse with him : and no woman might dwell with a clergyman, except she were his sister or his aunt, or of an age to which no suspicion could attach. Scripture was perverted with the grossest absurdity to justify these injurious laws, and prodigies were fabricated in default of truth and reason for their support. It was affirmed* that when married priests were administering the communion, the cup had been torn from their hands by a vehement wind, and the bread portentously snatched away : and that many of their wives had perished, under a divine judgment, by suicide, or by sudden death, and their bodies had been cast out of the grave by the evil spirits who had possession of their souls. Cardinal Crema came over as Legate to promote this favourite object of the Papacy. It happened that having in the morning delivered a discourse upon the wickedness of marriage in the clergy, he was discovered at night in bed with an harlot. This flagrant example was not necessary to prove the unfitness of such canons. The general feeling was strongly against them : And Henry, instead of enforcing laws so exceptionable, or resisting them as he ought to have done, turned them to his own advantage,† by allowing the clergy to retain their wives upon payment of a certain tax.‡

The efforts which Anselm had made in this cause, and for promoting the sovereignty of the Roman See, entitled him to canonization ; and miracles enough for establishing his claim were adduced. His biographer, the historian Eadmer, asserts, that a precious balsam intended for embalming his body having been spilt, with the little which remained, Baldwin, the master of his household, wished to anoint the face of the deceased Primate, and that right hand wherewith so many holy treatises had been written. It was so little that it scarcely moistened the end of a finger when put into the vessel ; Eadmer, however, was directed to hold his hand for the last drop, and the balsam flowed from the empty vessel in such profusion, that there was enough to anoint the whole body again and again. Nor was this the only miracle which Eadmer witnessed.§ The stone coffin had been made too shallow, and while the assistants, lamenting this mistake, knew not how to remedy it, the Bishop of Rochester drew his crosier across the body, and immediately the corpse contracted itself to the desired dimensions. Such is the character of ecclesiastical biography in that age, and in this spirit of deliberate and

* Acta Sanctorum, Maii, t. vi. p. 141.

† Fuller, b. iii. p. 23.

‡ Lyttleton's Henry II. vol. i. p. 153. Ed. 1769.

§ Acta Sanct. April, t. ii. p. 893.

systematic falsehood are the lives of the Romish saints composed.

The struggle between the papal and royal authorities did not impede the progress of those improvements which the Norman clergy introduced. A surprising revival of literature had been effected by Lanfranc and Anselm ; it extended beyond the monasteries, where learning had hitherto been confined ; and the schools at Cambridge are believed to have been first established at this time. The rigour with which Henry I., during a reign of five and thirty years, maintained tranquillity at home, allowing of no oppression except that which was exercised by his own officers, favoured the improvement of the nation. The original Saxon Churches, as they fell to decay, were now generally supplied by more elaborate structures ; and the introduction of painted glass, by making larger windows necessary,* led to the perfection of church architecture.

The ensuing reign was as disgraceful to the hierarchy as it was disastrous to the realm. Stephen had every requisite for the throne, except the first and most indispensable, a lawful title ; the Bishops who had sworn allegiance to the rightful successor, violated their oath and supported the usurper, the Legate approved his coronation, and the Pope sent him letters of confirmation, because he promised a reverent obedience to St Peter. The court of Rome, which was never withheld by any inconvenient scruples from taking whatever advantage political events might offer, gained by this usurpation more than it had lost during the schism ; whatever the Prelates asked, or Rome required, Stephen was ready to grant ; and when Henry, the first of the Plantagenet kings, succeeded to the crown, the securities which his ancestors had provided against ecclesiastical encroachments, had all been swept away.

CHAPTER VIII.

HENRY II.—THOMAS À BECKET.

WITH many weaknesses, and some vices, Henry II. was an able Prince. He found his kingdom in a state of frightful anarchy. During his predecessor's turbulent reign, castles had been built

* Whitaker's *Loidis et Elmete*, 120.

in all parts of the land, each being the stronghold of some petty tyrant, who, having a band of ruffians in his service, exercised the most grievous oppression as far as his power extended, and inflicted torments upon all who fell into his hands for the purpose of extorting money. This multiplied tyranny, which rendered the state of England worse than it had been during the ravages of the Danes, was put down with a strong hand; and the King having thus deserved the blessings of the people, applied himself with equal determination to suppress the abuses of the ecclesiastical power.

The most crying of these abuses was the exemption from all secular jurisdiction which the clergy had established for themselves. This was an evil which had imperceptibly arisen. The higher clergy at first interfered in disputes for the Christian purpose of reconciling the parties; gradually they became judges instead of mediators and arbitrators; and in this too there was an evident propriety, because in those rude ages, no other persons were so well qualified for the judicial office; because it might be presumed that they would temper justice with mercy, and because a religious sanction accompanied their decisions. Under the Saxon Kings, the Bishop sat with the sheriff in the County Court, and the Conqueror, when he separated their jurisdictions, did not foresee the consequences which resulted. The ecclesiastical courts followed the Canon law, parts of which had been forged for the purpose of withdrawing the dignified clergy from the ordinary tribunals, and placing them under the Pope's immediate authority, that is to say, his protection. By these laws, no clergyman might be condemned to death; stripes were the severest punishment that might be inflicted. Every one who had received the tonsure came under the privilege of the Canons; in that age, the number of those who were ordained and had no benefice was very great, and these persons, existing in idleness and poverty, stood in need of their privilege often enough, to prove that such immunities were incompatible with the general good. But it was not from the conduct of such persons only, that this inference was drawn; in the age when the pretensions of the Church were highest, the corruption of its members was also at its height. A contemporary monk has acknowledged, that the Prelates were more intent on maintaining the privileges, than correcting the vices of the clergy, who, because of the impunity which they possessed, stood in no awe either of God or man. A legend of that age marks the opinion which was entertained of their general

depravity. It was related in history,* not as a fable, but as a fact, that Satan and the company of infernal spirits sent their thanks in writing, by a lost soul from hell, to the whole ecclesiastical body, for denying themselves no one gratification, and for sending more of their flock thither, through their negligence, than had ever arrived in any former time.

While Henry was pursuing the great object of securing the public peace by a vigorous administration of justice, the judges represented to him the evil consequences of the immunity from all secular punishment which the clergy claimed and enjoyed, instancing that, because of these privileges, there had been already committed during his reign, more than an hundred acts of homicide, which were not cognisable by the laws.† Well aware how difficult it would be to correct this abuse, and reduce the ecclesiastical power within those bounds to which the Conqueror and his sons had confined it, Henry thought that the surest mode of facilitating this object, would be to select for the primacy, a person in whom he could confide. He chose, therefore, the Chancellor, Thomas à Becket,‡ the most confidential, as well as the ablest, of his servants, and the most intimate of his friends; a man who had hitherto resembled Wolsey in the favour which he enjoyed, and in the boundless magnificence of his life; but his character was compounded of stronger elements, and his mind of a higher class.

Though Becket already held several lucrative appointments in the Church, he was only in Deacon's orders, and had imbibed little of the spirit of his profession. Hitherto he had been soldier, courtier, statesman, anything rather than churchman; the boon companion of the King, his confidential counsellor, and the faithful minister of his will. If he desired this farther elevation, he dreaded it also; but the apprehension of difficulty and undefined danger operates as an incentive to ambitious zeal, especially in a mind like his. To his friends he said, that he must either lose the King's favour, or sacrifice to it the service of his God; and to Henry himself he expressed a like anticipation; but it was said with a smile, so that, whether intentionally or not, the manner conveyed a meaning which invalidated the words. Henry, indeed, believed that in raising Becket to the primacy, he promoted one who, knowing and approving his

* William of Malmsbury, p. 311.

† Turner, vol. i. p. 209. William of Newbury quoted.

‡ I have had before me, while composing the summary of Becket's life, Lord Lyttleton's Hist. of Henry II., and the

history of the same reign by my friend Mr Turner, and by Mr Berrington, a Roman Catholic historian, whom I must not mention without expressing my sincere respect for his erudition, his ability, and his candour.

views, would continue to further them ; and under that persuasion he issued a peremptory mandate for his appointment, in opposition to the advice of the Empress Queen his mother, the opinion of the nation, and of the clergy, . . . the very men in whom the ostensible right of election resided, opposing it as strongly as they could, and declaring it was indecent that a man, who was rather a soldier than a priest, and who spent his time in hunting and hawking, should be made an archbishop. They, as well as Henry, mistook the character of the man.

Becket on one day was ordained Priest, and consecrated Archbishop on the next. From that hour he devoted himself to the cause of the Church, the sense of duty being perfectly in accord with his ambitious disposition. To all outward appearance, the change in his life which ensued, was not less total and immediate than that which the grace of God effects in a repentant sinner ; but the inner man remained unchanged. The costliest splendour was still displayed in his apparel ; beneath his canonical dress he wore the Benedictine habit ; under that, sackcloth well stocked with vermin (for vermin were among the accompaniments of monastic sanctity) ; and within were the daring spirit, the fiery temper, and the haughty heart. Every part of his conduct now indicated the aspirant saint ; his food was of the coarsest kind ; bitter herbs were boiled in water to render his drink nauseous ; he flogged himself ; he washed the feet of the poor ; he visited the sick ; and the large sum which his predecessor had annually disbursed in alms was doubled by his munificent charity. His determination to oppose the King was intimated by sending back the seals of office, and desiring that he would provide himself with another chancellor, for he could hardly suffice, he said, to the duties of one office, far less of two. Upon this, the King called upon him to surrender also the archdeaconry of his own see, an office much more incompatible with his new dignity than the chancellorship ; it was the richest benefice in England, under a bishopric, and Becket withheld his resignation till it was forced from him. He must have acted undoubtedly upon some imagined right ; covetousness could have no place in a mind like his.

Henry had made an impolitic choice between the rival Popes, in acknowledging Alexander III., who had assisted in compiling the Decretals, and had been chosen by the Guelph party as a fit person to support the loftiest pretensions of the Papacy. That Pontiff held a council at Tours, in which the reformation of abuses, or the suppression of errors, was less the object than to

assist and strengthen what were called the liberties of the Church. Becket, who obtained permission to attend, presented to the Council a book of the life and miracles of Anselm, composed by his directions, as the miraculous life of Dunstan had been in like manner by Lanfranc's orders; and upon the ground that Anselm's sanctity was established by the miracles fabricated for the purpose, solicited canonisation for him. As Anselm's chief merit consisted in the firmness with which he had supported the Papal against the kingly power, this proposal for canonising him carried with it a sort of defiance to the King. The Pope, not deeming it prudent to disgust Henry by an act in itself gratuitously offensive, referred it to the decision of a Synod in England; but Becket soon found himself too deeply engaged in other disputes to pursue this point, and more than two centuries elapsed before Anselm was enrolled in the Kalendar.

Immediately on his return from the Council, he instituted proceedings for the recovery of church-lands, in pursuance of a canon passed there against all persons by whom such property was either usurped or detained. Had he proceeded temperately like Lanfranc, the laws and public feeling would in like manner have supported him. But he asserted the maxim of the Canon law, that no grant and no length of possession can hold against the claims of the Church; and upon that ground sought to recover castles, towns, honours, and manors from the barons, and even from the crown itself, which had devolved to them in the regular course of descent; although such claims may in themselves have been well founded, it is to be presumed, that unless there had been strong reasons for waiving them, they would not have been left dormant by his predecessors. He insisted also, that it was his right to present to all benefices in the manors of his tenants, and in maintenance of the assumed right, excommunicated a lord who refused to let possession be taken by a clergyman thus appointed. This lord held also under the King, and Henry, in support of an acknowledged prerogative, ordered Becket to withdraw the sentence. A haughty answer was returned, that it was not for the King to command who should be absolved or who excommunicated; but the law was explicit in this case, and Becket yielded after a warm contention, which served only to show a spirit of aggression on his part, and thereby increased the King's displeasure.

Undeceived when too late in the character of his former minister and friend, Henry, in pursuing his plans of salutary reform, had to encounter opposition where he had reckoned upon assis-

tance. Plain reason, however, and evident justice, and public opinion, were on his side, and he had a strong case to begin with. A priest had debauched the daughter of a respectable man, and then murdered the father that he might not be disturbed in his guilty intercourse with her. The King demanded that this atrocious criminal should be brought before a civil tribunal, and suffer condign punishment upon conviction; but Becket placed the culprit under custody of his diocesan, that he might not be delivered to the King's justice. Upon this Henry summoned the Bishops to attend him. He complained to them of the corruption of their courts, and of the practice of commuting all punishments for money, whereby, he said, they levied in a year more money from the people than he did. He observed that a clerical offender, instead of being screened from punishment by his sacred character, ought to be more severely punished, because he had abused that character. And he required that in future ecclesiastical persons accused of heinous crimes should be delivered into the hands of the Bishop, and if by him found guilty, be degraded, and then transferred to the civil power for punishment.*

The Prelates would have assented to this considerate and equitable proposal, which saved the honour of the Church, while it vindicated the rights of the law. But Becket conferred with them apart, and in deference to him they returned for answer, that no clergyman ought to suffer death, or loss of limb, for any crime whatsoever; nor to be judged in a secular court. The reason which they assigned was compounded of legal subtilty and ecclesiastical pride: it was a maxim, they said, that no one ought to be punished twice for the same offence; but ecclesiastical censures were a punishment, and of all punishments the most grievous, because they touched the soul. The only concession they made was to admit that a clergyman, who had been degraded, became amenable to the common law for any offence committed after his degradation. Henry had inherited the irritable temper of the Norman kings. Provoked at such a reply, he demanded of them whether they would obey the ancient customs of the realm? Becket replied, "Saving the privileges of his order:" and the other Prelates, all but one, returned the same answer; upon which the King remarked, that there was venom in the exception, and that he saw they were drawn up against him in battle array. The dispute, for it was no longer a council, continued all day; and Henry at last left the hall in

* Lyttleton, vol. iv. p. 16.

anger. The following morning he manifested his strong displeasure against the Primate by depriving him of the castles which had been intrusted to him as Chancellor, and which he had continued to hold after his resignation of that office.

But the Prelates re-considered the matter when they were no longer awed by Becket's presence, nor under the control of his commanding spirit: they felt the justice of the King's pretensions, and perceiving that he was bent upon effecting what he had undertaken, they represented to the Primate the propriety of making some concession. His answer was, that if an Angel were to descend from Heaven, and advise him to make the acknowledgment which the King required, without that saving clause, he would anathematise the Angel. Yet he was prevailed upon to relax this haughty resolution by the representations of his friends, and by the Pope's almoner, who affirmed that he had instructions from Rome to persuade him to submission. . . The King, they said, had no intention of touching the immunities of the Church: a nominal concession was all that he required; it was only a point of honour on his part that was at stake. Becket could hardly have believed this, acquainted as he well was both with the temper and the settled purpose of the King. Howbeit he yielded, waited on him at Woodstock, and told him he would observe the royal customs. Henry received him, not with the cordial affability of former times, . . . that was impossible, . . . but as one who was gladly disposed to accept the proffered conciliation; he expressed his satisfaction at the promise, and only required that Becket should repeat it before the Great Council of the realm.

Three months afterwards the Great Council was assembled at Clarendon, a palace not far from Salisbury, which is supposed to have derived its name from a fortification there erected by Constantine Chlorus,* and from which, in after years, one of the best and wisest of British statesmen and historians took his title. During the interval they who had acted as mediators with Becket supposed their work was done, and he had been left to take counsel with his own ambitious heart. To act in concert with Henry, and to promote the general good by the surrender of usurped immunities which were neither consistent with justice nor with decency, was a part less congenial to his temper than to stand forward, like Anselm, in the face of Europe, and brave the King as champion for the Church's privileges. When, therefore, the Parliament met, and Henry called upon the Bishops

* Hist. of Allcheſter.

for that unqualified promise of observing the customs, which it had been understood they were to make, Becket again required that it should be made with the saving clause. It was not likely that the King should render justice to the sense of ecclesiastical duty which was thus manifested by a breach of faith; however Becket may have stood self-justified, he had deceived the King; and in resentment at the deception practised upon him, Henry gave loose to the natural violence of his disposition. The threats which he uttered of banishment, and even of death, if they did not make the Primate tremble for himself, made others tremble for him. The Bishops entreated him, even with tears, to submit. The Earls of Leicester and Cornwall told him they were ordered to use force if he persisted in his refusal, and they implored him not to urge on a catastrophe, which, if it took place, would be calamitous and disgraceful to them all. Two Knights Templars, men of great ability and in the King's favour, were desired to use their influence; and they weeping supplicated him on their knees to have some regard to himself, and some pity for his clergy. It was manifest that Henry, exasperated as he was, was now determined upon carrying his point, by whatever means; for the clash of arms was heard, and men were seen in the adjoining apartments brandishing swords and battle-axes, ready at a word to have used them. Becket's heart was not susceptible of fear: but in this case the generous anxiety concerning him which was expressed, and an apprehension that if the signal for violence were given, the blow might fall on others as well as on himself, moved him; and yielding a second time, he promised on the word of truth that he would observe the ancient customs of the realm. The other Prelates followed his example. It was then ordered that such of the assembly as knew the customs best should put them in writing: a list of the elders was made out to whom this task was assigned; and at Becket's motion the business was prorogued till the morrow.

The customs which were now reduced to writing were called the Constitutions of Clarendon; the most important articles which they contained relating to ecclesiastical matters were, That disputes concerning the advowsons and presentations of churches should be tried and determined in the King's courts; that ecclesiastics should answer in the secular courts for matters there cognisable, and in the spiritual ones for cases within the spiritual jurisdiction; so that the King's justiciary should send to the court of holy Church to see in what manner the cause might be tried there; and if a clerk were convicted, or confessed

his guilt, the Church should not protect him. No Prelate or dignified clergyman might leave the realm without the King's licence, and when they went the King might demand security that they would not procure any evil or damage to the King or kingdom. No tenant or officer of the King might be excommunicated, nor his land laid under an interdict, unless the King or his justiciary had been apprised of the proceedings. Appeals were to proceed from the Archdeacon to the Bishop, and from the Bishop to the Archbishop: if he failed in doing justice, the cause was to be brought to the King, and by his precept determined in the Archbishop's court, so that it might not be carried farther without the King's consent. If there were any dispute concerning a tenement which on the one part was pretended to be held in frank-almoigne, and on the other as a lay-fee, the question was to be first determined before the King's Chief Justice, by the verdict of twelve lawful men, and the cause then referred to its proper court. An inhabitant of the King's demesne, refusing to appear if he were cited by the ecclesiastical authorities, might be put under an interdict, but not excommunicated until the King's chief officer of the place should have been required to compel him by course of law to answer: if the officer failed in this duty, he should be at the mercy of the King, and the Bishop might in that case compel the accused person by ecclesiastical censures. Bishoprics and monasteries of royal foundation should be in the hands of the King while vacant, as his own demesne; the elections were to be made in the King's chapel, with his assent, and the advice of such prelates as he might convoke; and the person elected should do homage, saving his order, before he was consecrated.

If these Constitutions were in direct opposition to the system of Hildebrand and his successors, and at once removed all those encroachments, which the hierarchy had made in this kingdom during Stephen's contested reign, it should be remembered that they were not new edicts enacted in a spirit of hostility to the Church, but a declaration and recognition of the existing laws.* They were laid before Parliament on the following day, and the Prelates were then required to set their seals to the record. Becket alone demurred. He had pledged his word to observe the customs, and his name was inserted in the preamble among those who recognised and consented to them: his declaration,

* *Recordatio vel recognitio cujusdam regis Henrici, avi sui, et aliorum, quæ partis consuetudinum, et libertatum, et observari et teneri debent in regno.* These are the words of the preamble.

therefore, that he had not engaged to confirm them by setting his seal was curiously inconsistent, showing at the same time how lax were his notions of a moral obligation, and how strong his conscientious adherence to the Papal cause. He asked time for consideration, and it was granted. Three transcripts of the record were made, one for the royal archives, one for the Archbishop of York, and the third was delivered to Becket, and the Parliament then broke up. Whether he afterwards sealed to it has not been stated. It may be presumed that he did, because when the King some time after sent to the Pope, requesting him to confirm the ancient customs of the kingdom, by authority of the Apostolic See, Becket joined with the Archbishop of York in writing to support the request. In so doing he acted with a deceitfulness, for which an excuse can be found only in the convenient casuistry of his own church. For as if he had committed a sin in consenting to these customs, he imposed upon himself the penance of abstaining from the service of the altar forty days. The Pope absolved him from that sin, in consideration of his intentions, and of the compulsion under which he had acted; but he counselled him to be moderate. Difficult as it was for Becket to learn this lesson, it was probably in obedience to the advice, that he repaired to the King's residence at Woodstock, and solicited audience. But Henry had been informed that Becket had spoken contemptuously of his infirm and irritable temper, and as if to prove that he could be steady in a just resentment, he refused to see him.

Such marked displeasure afforded Becket a pretext for taking the course which was most in unison with his own feelings. He sent an agent to the French King, that he might secure for himself a powerful protector, and going by night to the port of Romney, embarked for France. But though he, who had the example of Anselm before his eyes, set at nought the laws which he had pledged his word to observe, the sailors would not expose themselves to danger by carrying him, and he was therefore fain to return to Canterbury. His motions had been watched, and he was just in time to prevent the King's officers who had been sent to seize his possessions. Henry was alarmed at this attempt, well knowing what embarrassment this former minister might create for him if he were admitted to the counsels of the French King; and when Becket presented himself again at Woodstock, he received him mildly: the only expression of his real feeling was a question, but as it were in sport, whether the reason why he had wished to withdraw from the kingdom, was, because the

same land could not contain them both? Each at this time appears to have judged of the other's heart, by the rankling at his own: and interested spirits were not wanting on both sides to exasperate their mutual suspicions and ill-will. The Court of Rome expected by an open contest to increase its power, as hitherto it had uniformly done; and there were men about Henry, who, if any confiscation of church property could be brought about, looked for a share in the spoils.

Becket, on returning from the interview, said to his friends that he must either yield with shame or combat manfully. When such appeared to be the alternative, the choice which such a man would make could not be doubtful. He began to act boldly in defiance of the Constitutions of Clarendon, protecting churchmen upon the ground of their assumed immunities, as if no such statutes had existed. Henry was warned by some of his counsellors to take heed, or it would be seen that he whom the Clergy should elect would be King, and reign no longer than it pleased the Primate. The Great Council was summoned at Northampton; and when Becket repaired thither, the King was inaccessible to him the first day, and on the second refused to receive from him the customary kiss of peace. Indeed he could not with propriety have accepted it, for Becket had been cited there to answer for his conduct as an offender and defaulter. The first accusation was, that he had refused justice to a great officer of the household; and that having, upon complaint made to the King, been ordered to appear before him, his answer had been that he would not obey the summons. A charge of high-treason was founded upon this, such were the notions of feudal obligation! and being held guilty, his goods and chattels were declared to be at the King's mercy. In cases of such forfeiture, a commutation was usually accepted which custom had rendered fixed, and in Kent at the moderate sum of forty shillings; but from the Archbishop five hundred pounds were exacted: a vindictive sentence, neither to be justified by the offence, nor by the disproportion between his property and that of the poorest freeman who could have become amenable to the same law. He gave sureties for the payment, and thus ended the business of the first day.

If the King had acted as became him, he would have rested his dispute with Becket upon the Customs, and arraigned him for disregarding the Constitutions of Clarendon. Instead of this, he sought to break his spirit and ruin his fortune by a series of demands not less unjust than ungenerous. . . . On the follow-

ing day he called upon him for three hundred pounds, which he had received as warden of the King's castles, while he held that trust. He replied that he had expended more than that sum upon them, as the repairs themselves might show; but he would pay it, for money should be no ground of quarrel between him and the King. Such an answer might have disarmed Henry's resentment had his better mind prevailed: in his then temper it mortified him, and increased his irritation. The next demand was for five hundred pounds, which Henry affirmed he had lent him: Becket answered it had been given to him, not lent: his affirmation was not allowed to balance the King's, and for this also he gave surety. There can be little doubt that he had received it as a gift, and that as such it was intended at the time, though the intention may not have been expressed. But Henry's determination to crush the man whom he now regarded as his mortal enemy, was more fully displayed on the third day, when he called upon him for an account of all the monies which he had received during his Chancellorship, and demanded payment of the balance. Becket's conduct at Clarendon was more excusable than Henry's at Northampton: his vacillation and retractations, and the degree of duplicity with which he had acted, rose from a sense of duty, always honourable in itself, even when, as in his case, erroneous both in principle and in action: but the King acted tortuously, in the spirit of hatred and vengeance. The answer was, that he had not been questioned for these monies before his consecration, but on the contrary, Prince Henry, the King's eldest son, and Leicester his Justiciary, had discharged him from all such demands, and as so discharged, the Church received him. To this charge, therefore, he was not bound to plead: but it had come upon him unexpectedly, and he asked leave to consult with the Bishops, with whom accordingly he withdrew into a separate apartment.

Whether Becket, after the manner in which he had been discharged from this demand, were still liable to it in strict law, may be a questionable point; but that in honour and equity he stood discharged is evident; and free judges, could such have been found, would have pronounced his acquittal with as little hesitation then, as an unbiased judgment can feel upon the question now. The sum claimed was the enormous one of forty-four thousand marks of silver. He was advised to compound, and offered two thousand, which were of course refused. The legal question, however, seems not to have been debated by the Bishops: they saw the demand in its true light, and perfectly

understood what was the King's purpose: but they were no friends to Becket; they knew he had provoked a dispute which might well have been avoided, and in which, if it continued, they must unwillingly be implicated; and they stood in fear of Henry, who, like his Norman predecessors, was of a temper to make men tremble. The Bishop of London advised him to resign the primacy, which if he did, the King, he observed, might then be moved to re-instate him in his possessions. One Prelate agreed in this counsel, because it appeared to him that Becket had only to choose between surrendering his see or losing his life; another, because it was better for the Church that one man should suffer than all; a third, because it was expedient to submit for a time. The Bishop of Worcester said he would not belie his conscience by saying that the cure of souls might be resigned for the sake of pleasing a prince, or of appeasing him; neither would he deliver a contrary opinion which might draw upon him the King's displeasure. The only person who supported Becket was the late King's brother, Henry of Winchester, a man of great ability and courage: he declared that the advice which had been given was pernicious, and that the rights of the clergy would be overthrown, if the Primate were to set an example of relinquishing his charge at the will or menace of his sovereign. Perceiving how little help or counsel he was likely to find in his brethren, Becket desired to speak with the Earls of Leicester and Cornwall; and saying that the persons best acquainted with his affairs were not present, requested on that ground a respite till Monday, (the morrow being Sunday), when he promised to make his answer to the demand, as God should inspire him.

Becket was one of those men whose true greatness is seen only in times of difficulty and danger, when they are deprived of all adventitious aid and left wholly to themselves. The large retinue of knights and other followers, who had attended him to Parliament, forsook him in his disgrace. His contempt as well as his indignation was roused by this ungrateful and cowardly desertion; and turning it to account, he sent his servants out to collect the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind, from the streets and lanes of the town, and from the highways and hedges, and invite them to his table; with such an army, he said, he should more easily obtain the victory, than with those who had shamefully forsaken him in the hour of danger. This was in the spirit of the age, and of the man. His heart was never stronger; but the body gave way, and agitation of mind brought on a severe fit of a disease, to which he was subject; so that

when Monday came he was unable to leave his bed. The illness was said to be feigned, and two earls were deputed to cite him before the Parliament. They saw what detained him, he said, but with God's help he would appear before them on the morrow, even if he were carried in a litter. The respite was granted; but it was intimated to him, probably with the intention of instigating him to flight, that if he appeared, his destruction, or at least his imprisonment, was resolved on.

Feeling himself in the situation of an injured man as the Primate now did, and looking to Heaven for that protection, which seemed to be denied him on earth, the religious feeling which such circumstances induce, softened his heart as well as elevated it, and at one time he had almost resolved to go barefoot to the palace, throw himself at the King's feet, and adjure him to be reconciled by the remembrance of their former friendship. But then a conscientious attachment to the cause which had drawn on him this persecution came in aid of his native pride; and, finally, his determination was made to connect his own cause with that of the Church, and to act or suffer in that spirit. On the Monday at an early hour, many of the Bishops came to exhort him to submission, for the peace of the Church, and for his own safety: otherwise, they told him, he would be charged with perjury and treason, for breaking the customs which he had so lately sworn to observe. To this he replied, that he had been inexcusable before God, in swearing to observe them; but it was better to repent than perish. David had sworn rashly, and repented; Herod kept his oath, and perished. He enjoined them therefore to reject what he rejected, and annul these customs, which if they continued in force would overthrow the Church. Assuming then a loftier tone, he told them it was a detestable proceeding, that in this affair they should not only have forsaken him, their spiritual father, but have sat in judgment upon him with the Barons. He forbade them to be present at any further proceedings against him, in virtue of the obedience which they owed him, and at the peril of their order; and he declared that he appealed to their mother, the Church of Rome, the refuge of all who were oppressed. He commanded them to thunder out the ecclesiastical censures, should the secular power presume to lay hands on him, their father and metropolitan; and he concluded by assuring them that, even though his body should be burnt, he would neither shamefully yield, nor wickedly forsake the flock committed to his charge.

As soon as the bishops left him, he went into the Church, and

there at St Stephen's altar performed the mass appointed for that martyr's day, beginning with these words, "Princes sate and spake against me;" and as if this did not sufficiently manifest his readiness to endure martyrdom, he caused a verse of the psalms to be sung, which could not be mistaken as to its intended application; "the Kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed." Then having secretly provided himself with a consecrated wafer, he proceeded to the Great Council, and at the door took the silver cross from the chaplain, who according to custom was bearing it before him. The Bishops came out to meet him; they knew that this unusual conduct could not be intended to mollify the King, nor to indicate a wish for conciliation; and the Bishop of Hereford putting forth his hand said, Let me be your cross-bearer, as becomes me! But Becket answered, No: the cross was his safeguard, and would denote under what prince he was combating. The Archbishop of York reproved him for coming thus, as it were armed, in defiance of his sovereign; and Gilbert of London observed, that if the King saw him enter with such arms, he would unsheath his own, which were of greater force. Becket replied that the King's weapon could indeed kill the body, but his could destroy the soul. Then passing on, he entered the assembly, and took his seat in silence, holding the cross before him.

If Becket at this time actually thought his life in danger, the fate which he afterwards met, may prove that the apprehension was not so unreasonable as it might otherwise be deemed. Whether he entertained such fear or not, it was plainly his intention to act as if he did; should he provoke the blow which he seemed to expect, he was ready to meet it with becoming dignity and characteristic courage; in the more likely case, that the unusual manner of his appearance would confuse the King's counsels, something might occur of which he might take advantage. Considering, therefore, Becket's temper and opinions, the measure was as judicious as it was bold. Henry was no sooner informed in what attitude the Primate was approaching, than he rose hastily from his seat, and retired into an inner room, whither he summoned all the other lords, spiritual and temporal, and complained to them of this act of defiance. The Great Council, as well as the King, regarded it as a deliberate insult, studied for the purpose of throwing upon them the imputation of some treacherous purpose. Henry's violent temper was exasperated to such a pitch, that the Archbishop of

York trembled for Becket's life, and departed with his chaplains, dreading to behold what might ensue. The Bishop of Exeter hastened fearfully to the Primate and besought him to have pity upon himself and his brethren, who were all in danger of perishing on his account. Becket, eyeing him with stern contempt, replied, "Fly, then! thou canst not understand the things which are of God." And he remained unmoved, holding the cross, and awaiting what might befall.

His part was not difficult after it had once been taken: the straight path is always easy. But Henry was thoroughly perplexed. The general sense of the Great Council was, that the Primate's present conduct was an affront to the King and the peers; that Henry had drawn it on himself, by elevating such a person to that high and unmerited station; and that for ingratitude and breach of fealty, Becket ought to be impeached of perjury and of high treason. Not from moderation, but with the hope of avoiding the embarrassments which he foresaw in that mode of proceeding, Henry rejected their opinion, and reverting to his pecuniary charges, sent to demand of the Primate, whether upon that matter he would stand to the judgment of the court. Becket peremptorily refused, and it was then again proposed to attain him. But the Bishops dared not proceed to this, because he had appealed to the Pope; and they knew the power of the Roman see too well, not to be fearful of offending it. They besought the King that he would let them appeal to Rome, against the Primate, on the score of his perjury; promising that if they might be excused from concurring with the temporal lords in the sentence which was about to be passed, they would use their utmost endéavours for persuading the Pope to depose him from the primacy. The King unwarily consented: upon which they repaired to Becket, and pronouncing him guilty of perjury, as having broken his fealty, they renounced their obedience to him, placed themselves under the Pope's protection against him, and cited him before the Pope to answer the accusation. His only reply was, "I hear what you say!" He could not have heard anything more conformable to his own views and wishes. The Prelates then took their seats on the opposite side of the hall.

Meantime the temporal peers pronounced him guilty of perjury and treason; and leaving the inner chamber where their resolution had been passed, came to notify it to the accused. The alternative, however, of rendering his accounts and discharging the balance, was still to be allowed him, and Leicester,

as Chief Justiciary, called upon him to come before the King and do this, otherwise, said he, hear your sentence! . . . "My sentence!" exclaimed Becket, rising from his seat; "nay, Sir Earl, hear you first! You are not ignorant how faithfully, according to the things of this world, I served my Lord the King, in consideration of which service it pleased him to raise me to the primacy; God knows, against my will! for I knew my own unfitness, and rather for love of him than of God, consented, which is this day sufficiently made evident, seeing that God withdraws from me both Himself, and the King also. It was asked at my election, in presence of Prince Henry, unto whom that charge had been committed, in what manner I was given to the Church? And the answer was, Free and discharged from all bonds of the Court. Being, therefore, thus free and discharged, I am not bound to answer concerning these things; nor will I."

The Earl here observed that this reply was very different from what had before been given. "Listen, my son!" Becket pursued. "Inasmuch as the soul is of more worth than the body, by so much more are you bound to obey God and me, rather than an earthly king. Neither by law or reason is it allowed that children should judge or condemn their father. Wherefore I disclaim the King's judgment, and yours, and all the other peers', being only to be judged under God by our Lord the Pope, to whom I here appeal before you all, committing the church of Canterbury, my order and dignity, with all thereunto appertaining, to God's protection and to his. In like manner, my brethren, and fellow-bishops, you who have chosen to obey man rather than God, I cite you before the presence of our Lord the Pope! And thus, relying on the authority of the Catholic Church, and of the Apostolic See, I depart hence." As he was leaving the hall a clamour was raised against him, and some there were who reproached him as a perjured traitor: upon which he looked fiercely round, and said with a loud voice, that were it not forbidden by his holy orders, he would defend himself by arms against those who dared thus to accuse him. Anger for the moment overcame him, and he who had hitherto displayed such perfect dignity throughout this trying scene, forgot himself so far as to revile in foul and inhuman language two of the persons who were, indecently indeed, expressing their disapprobation of his conduct. No attempt at detaining him was made. The beggars, with the populace, and the poorer clergy, followed him in crowds, and were entertained as his

guests, in the monastery where he was lodged. His next measure was to request permission to leave the kingdom. Henry replied, he would advise with his council the next day; but Becket, deeming it imprudent to await the decision, left Northampton privily in the night; and eluding pursuit by a circuitous course, effected his escape at length to the coast of Flanders.

However incensed the King may have been at Becket's flight, and apprehensive as he certainly was of its injurious consequences, he was careful not to prejudice his own case by hastily proceeding to extremities; and therefore forbore from seizing his temporalities, or visiting his offence upon those who were related to him, as the barbarous customs of that age authorised. Without delay he despatched ambassadors to the King of France and to the Pope, the two persons whose good will it most behoved him to conciliate. But the French King, who from many circumstances, personal and political, was inimically disposed towards Henry, had assured Becket, when that Prelate, meditating such a retreat, had sent over an agent to secure his reception, that he would receive him not as a bishop or archbishop, but as a partner in his kingdom. In this he was actuated by principle not less than passion, for he was devout by nature, thoroughly imbued with the superstition of the age, and believed the cause of the hierarchy to be that of religion. When therefore the ambassadors presented their letters requesting that he would not admit into his territories the late Archbishop of Canterbury, who had fled from England like a traitor; he took up the unadvised expression, and repeating "late Archbishop!" demanded who had deposed him? They were embarrassed by the question. "I," he pursued, "am a king as well as my brother of England; yet I would not have deprived the lowest clerk in my dominions, nor do I think I have power to do so. I knew this Thomas when he was chancellor: he served your King long and faithfully, and this is his reward, that his master, having driven him from England, would also drive him out of France!" So warmly indeed did Louis take up the Primate's cause, that he despatched his almoner to the Pope, exhorting him as he regarded the honour of the Church, and the weal of the French kingdom, to support Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, against the English tyrant.

The ambassadors proceeded to Sens, where Alexander III. at that time resided, Rome being in possession of the antipope. They consisted of the Archbishop of York, four other bishops, and four barons,—showing what importance Henry attached to

the cause. Higher persons, they said, the King could find none in his kingdom; if he could, he would have sent them to shew his reverence toward the holy Father and the sacred Roman Church. What they solicited was, that his Holiness would send the Archbishop back to England, and appoint legates to judge him there. Some cardinals were of opinion it was expedient to do this in conformity to the King's desire, lest Henry should be driven to espouse the cause of the rival Pope. But the Papal Court was not now to learn that the boldest policy is the best. Legates, Alexander said, they should have; but when it was asked of him that they might have powers for deciding the cause without appeal, "That," he replied, "is my glory, which I will not give to another; and certainly when the Archbishop is judged it shall be by ourselves. It is not reasonable that we should remand him to England, there to be judged by his adversaries, and in the midst of his enemies." The bent of his mind was so apparent in all this, that the Earl of Arundel, who was the head-piece of the embassy, hinted to him such conduct might perhaps provoke the King to seek for better treatment from his competitor; and the ambassadors left Sens without asking his blessing.

Becket, who had obtained a liberal allowance for himself and his followers from Louis, arrived at Sens soon afterwards. The Cardinals received him coldly, as one who was likely to weaken their cause by the contest in which he was involving them; but the Pope gave him public audience, seated him at his right hand, and as a farther mark of honour, bade him keep his seat while he spake. The Primate rested his case upon that point which was sure to interest the persons to whom he appealed. Leaving the pecuniary demand which had been the occasion of the breach unnoticed, he produced the Constitutions of Clarendon, and called upon the assembly to judge whether, without destroying his own soul, he could consent that such laws against the liberty of the Church should be brought into action? Hitherto there had been an evident leaning towards Henry on the part of the Cardinals; but now the whole council resolved, with one accord, that in Becket's person the cause of the universal Catholic Church should be supported. They then examined the Constitutions, and the Pope tolerating six of them, not, he said, as good, but as less evil than the rest, condemned the other ten; thus sitting in judgment upon the acts of an English parliament, and the laws of England. The Pope upon this occasion informed the assembly, that Becket had applied to him

before he left England to be pardoned for the sin of consenting to these Constitutions; his repentance, he said, the sacrifices which he had made, and the sufferings he had endured, entitled him to indulgence.

But Becket was conscious that his own appointment to the primacy had been a greater violation of the rights of the Church than any of those which he had thus brought under the Pope's cognisance; and that Alexander, by deposing him upon that plea, might not only satisfy the King of England, without compromising the Papal cause, but establish a strong precedent upon one of the most important points in dispute between the civil and ecclesiastical powers. On the following day, he appeared before the Pope and the Cardinals in a more private room, and acknowledged that these troubles had been brought upon the Church of England, through his miserable offence; for he had ascended into the fold of Christ, not by the true door, not having been called thither by a canonical election, but obtruded by the terror of secular power: what wonder then that he should have succeeded so ill? Had he however surrendered his see through fear of the King's menaces, when his brethren advised him so to do, that would have been leaving a pernicious example. Therefore he had deferred it till the present hour; but now, acknowledging the unlawfulness of his entrance, and fearing a worse exit; perceiving also that his strength was unequal to the burthen, and lest the flock whose unworthy pastor he had been made should perish, he resigned his see into the holy Father's hands. Accordingly, taking off his Episcopal ring, he delivered it to the Pope, desired him to provide a proper pastor for the Church, which was now vacant, and then left the room. There were some of opinion that a happier means of terminating the dispute could not be devised, that the resignation ought to be accepted, and Becket provided for at some future opportunity. But Alexander, who as a statesman was worthy of his station, maintained that if Becket were permitted to fall a sacrifice, all other bishops would fall with him; no ecclesiastic after such an example would venture to resist the will of his sovereign; the fabric of the Church would thus be shaken, and the Papal authority perish. Becket was now called in, and the Pope told him that whatever fault there had been in his promotion, was cancelled by the manner in which he had acknowledged it, and by his resignation; that he now restored him to his functions, and would never desert him while he lived, viewing him as a pattern for imitation, dear to God and men, dear to himself, and to the

Catholic Church. But as hitherto he had lived in affluence, it was now time that he should learn the lessons which poverty alone could teach; and for that end he commended him to the abbot of Pontigny, there present, one of the poor of Christ, in whose monastery he might live as became a banished man, and a champion of our Lord. He then gave him his blessing, and sent him, in compliance with his own request, a Cistercian habit. Becket was thus enrolled in that order, and observed at Pontigny the monastic rule of life, according to the strictest form which was at that time prevailing.

The conduct of the Pope irritated Henry, and he gave orders for stopping the payment of that annual contribution known by the name of Peter's pence. Had Wicliffe then been living, or had there been among the English bishops another man endowed with the same talents and intrepidity as Becket, it is more than likely that the Church of England would then have separated from that of Rome, and that a reformation would have commenced, not less honourable in its origin than beneficial in its consequences. But Henry had no counsellor equal to the crisis. He sequestered the Primate's estates, ordered the Bishops to suspend the revenues of every clergyman who followed him into France, or took part in his behalf, declared all correspondence with him criminal, and forbade his name to be mentioned in the public prayers. But acting under the impulse of passion, he went beyond the bounds of policy and justice in his resentment, banishing, by one sweeping sentence, all the kinsmen, friends, and dependants of Becket, to the number of nearly four hundred persons, without exception of sex or age; their goods were confiscated, and they were compelled to take an oath, that they would repair to Becket wherever he might be, the King's intention being to distress him by the sight of their sufferings, and burthen him with their support. This inhuman act was in the spirit of feudal tyranny and of the times. When Henry had determined upon raising his favourite to the primacy, the Bishops of the province were threatened, that they and all their relations should be banished, if they refused to elect him, and this had been done certainly with Becket's knowledge, probably with his consent. The conduct which cannot be justified, may thus be explained: it admits of no palliation; . . . and indeed, next to the guilt of those who commit wicked actions, is that of the historian who glosses them over or excuses them.

This inhumanity, which on other occasions would only have excited the compassion of a few obscure individuals, called forth

an outcry of indignation, and produced a display of ostentatious charity toward the sufferers. Some of them made their way to Pontigny; others were absolved from the observance of their oath; and they were liberally maintained by those powerful persons who supported the Papal cause, especially the King of France: some were even invited by the Queen of Sicily, and went to partake her bounty, so widely did the interest which was excited by this dispute extend. Nor was this the only unworthy act into which Henry was hurried by his anger. He had resolved, with the advice of his barons, and the consent of his clergy, to send ambassadors to the Pope, requiring him so to rid him of the traitor Becket, as that he might establish another Primate in his stead, and to engage that he and his successors would, as far as in them lay, maintain to the kings of England the customs of Henry I., otherwise he and his clergy would no longer obey Pope Alexander, . . . so near was the Church of England to a separation at that time! The resolution was becoming if it had been adhered to steadily, and Henry's ambassadors at the Diet of Wittemberg so far pledged him, that the Emperor in his letters-patent announced the adherence of England to the Ghibelline Pope. But their act was disavowed in a manner which evinced a want of firmness in the King, . . perhaps of veracity. His own mind appears to have been subdued by the superstition of the age, and he stood in awe both of the Pope, and of the man whom he hated.

A conference between Henry and the Pope had been proposed, to which the King consented, upon the reasonable condition that Becket should not be present. But Becket dreaded the effect of such an interview, and entreated Alexander not to agree to it on that condition, saying, that without the assistance of an interpreter as competent as himself, he would be in danger of being deceived by the King's subtlety. Circumstances at this time enabled Alexander to return to Rome; and this good fortune encouraged him to answer the King in a manner which might justly be deemed dignified, if it were justified by the occasion. It had never, he said, been heard that the Roman Church had driven any person out of her train at the command of princes, especially one who was banished for the cause of justice. To succour the exiled and oppressed of all nations against the violence of their sovereigns, was a privilege and authority granted from above to the Apostolic See. In the same temper he appointed Becket his legate for England, thus arming him with full powers for proceeding to extremities against his sovereign, an act not

less flagrantly improper than it was gratuitously offensive to the King.

With such powers in his own cause no man ought to have been invested, least of all men, one so vehement as Becket. Already, from his retirement at Pontigny, he had addressed epistles monitory and comminatory to the King, wherein he bade him remember that sovereigns received their authority from the Church, and that priests were the fathers and masters of kings, princes, and of all the faithful: it was madness, then, if a son should attempt to hold his father in subjection, or a pupil his master, and reduce under his power that person by whom he may be bound or loosed, not only on earth, but in heaven. To pass sentence upon a priest was not within the sphere of human laws: it was not for kings to judge bishops, but to bow their heads before them; and he reminded Henry that kings and emperors had been excommunicated. To the clergy he said that in his person Christ had been judged again before an earthly tribunal. "Arise! why sleep ye? unsheath the sword of Peter! Avenge the injuries of the Church! cry aloud! cease not!" That he was preparing to draw that sword himself was apparent from these preliminaries, and from his suspending the Bishop of Salisbury for having admitted a dean into that cathedral, during the absence of certain canons who had followed him into exile. And so apprehensive was Henry of what was to ensue, that summoning his counsellors, he complained to them with tears and violent emotion, saying, Becket tore his body and soul, and they were all traitors for using no endeavours to deliver him from that man's annoyance! One of the Norman Bishops advised him to appeal to the Pope, as the sole means which could avert the impending sentence; and to this, inconsistent as it was with the dignity of the Crown, and with the very principles for which he was contending, he consented. The truth is, that at heart he was a superstitious man: in times of vexation or low spirits he used to talk of retiring into a convent; and the course of his private life made absolution so convenient and necessary to his comfort, that the thought of lying under the censures of the Church was more than he could bear. Accordingly two bishops were deputed to notify the appeal to Becket.

Before they arrived, Becket had commenced the spiritual war in a manner not less characteristic of the man, than of the age. The body of St Drauscio was venerated at Soissons, where he had been bishop; and there prevailed an opinion that any person

about to engage in battle,* would be rendered invincible by keeping a vigil before his shrine. Persons came even from Italy, and other distant countries, under this persuasion; and the success of Robert de Montford, in a judicial combat, after performing this devotion, had recently given it great credit in England. To Soissons therefore Becket went, and watched one night before the body, as one who was prepared to enter the lists, and needed his heavenly assistance; a second vigil he kept before the shrine of St Gregory the Great, the founder of the Anglo-Saxon Church, whose relics also were deposited at Soissons; and a third before the altar of his own patroness the Virgin. Thus armed for the conflict, he prepared on the ensuing Whitsunday to thunder out his censures against the King in the church at Vizelay, near his convent. A message from the King of France, announcing that Henry was dangerously ill, and on that account advising him to defer the sentence, withheld him from this last extremity; but to everything short of it he proceeded. On the appointed day a great concourse of people assembled at the Church; Becket preached, in what strain we know not, in what temper is but too plain. At the end an awful pause ensued, the bells tolled, the crosses were inverted, and the assistant priests, twelve in number, stood round him, holding torches, which were presently with dreadful execrations to be extinguished. He then pronounced the impious form of excommunication against John of Oxford, for associating with schismatics, and for what he styled his intrusion into the deanery of Salisbury; against the Archdeacon of Poitiers, for holding communion with the Archbishop of Cologne, who adhered to the Ghibelline Pope; against three persons to whom part of his sequestered goods had been granted, and against all who should dare lay hands on the property of his church: finally, against Joceline de Baliol, and the Chief Justiciary, as favourers of the King's tyranny, and contrivers of those heretical pravities, the

* How St Drauseio, an inoffensive man, whose life is one of the most uneventful in hagiology, should have become the Patron Saint in such cases, does not appear. The most notable thing recorded of him is, that after he had been dead and buried three years, he not only permitted his devotees to cut his hair and his nails for relics, but even allowed them to draw one of his teeth, though the operation produced an effusion of blood, as if it had been performed upon a living subject! *Acta Sanctorum Mart.* t. i. p. 409, 410. The

blood of our Saviour (!) was shewn as a relic at the little town of Wilsnach, in Branbenburg. A certain vassal named Henry, having challenged Frederick, his lord, to single combat, dedicated his arms to this Blood, and killed his adversary. This brought the relic into such repute that crowds flocked to the place. To such profanation and perversion of Christianity has this evil system of blasphemous imposture given occasion. *L'Enfant's Council of Constance*, l. p. 28. English translation.

Constitutions of Clarendon. The execrations were concluded by dashing down the torches and extinguishing them, as the prelate, in the words of this execrable ceremony, pronounced an authoritative wish, that the souls of those whom he had delivered to perdition might in like manner be quenched in Hell. This was not all : he read the Constitutions, and condemned the whole of them ; excommunicated all who should abet, enforce, or observe them ; annulled the statute whereby they were enacted, and absolved the bishops from the oath which they had taken to obey them. Then naming the King, and mentioning the admonitions which he had sent him, he there in public called upon him to repent and atone for the wrongs which he had offered to the Church, otherwise, a sentence, such as that which they had just heard pronounced, should fall upon his head.

Excommunication had been one means whereby the Druids maintained their hierocracy ; and it has been thought, that among nations of Keltic origin, the clergy, as succeeding to their influence, established more easily the portentous tyranny which they exercised, not over the minds of men alone, but in all temporal concerns. Every community must possess the right of expelling those members who will not conform to its regulations : the Church, therefore, must have power to excommunicate a refractory member, as the State has to outlaw a bad subject, who will not answer to the laws. But there is reason to believe that no heathen priests ever abused this power so prodigiously as the Roman clergy ; nor even if the ceremonies were borrowed, as is not improbable, from heathen superstition, could they originally have been so revolting, so horrible, as when a christian minister called upon the Redeemer of mankind to fulfil execrations which the devil himself might seem to have inspired. In the forms* of malediction appointed for this blasphemous service, a curse was pronounced against the obnoxious persons in soul and body, and in all their limbs and joints and members, every part being specified with a bitterness which seemed to delight in dwelling on the sufferings that it imprecated. They were cursed with pleonastic specification, at home and abroad, in their goings out and their comings in, in towns and in castles, in fields and in meadows, in streets and in public ways, by land and by water, sleeping and waking, standing and sitting and lying, eating and drinking, in their food and in their excrement, speaking or holding their peace, by day and by

* Martene. *De Antiquis Ecclesiæ Ritibus*, pp. 903, 911. The curious in curses may find seven formularies there.

night, and every hour, in all places, and at all times, everywhere and always. The heavens were adjured to be as brass to them, and the earth as iron; the one to reject their bodies, and the other their souls. God was invoked, in this accursed service, to afflict them with hunger and thirst, with poverty and want, with cold and with fever, with scabs and ulcers and itch, with blindness and madness, . . . to eject them from their homes, and consume their substance, . . . to make their wives widows, and their children orphans and beggars; all things belonging to them were cursed, the dog which guarded them, and the cock which wakened them. None was to compassionate their sufferings, nor to relieve or visit them in sickness. Prayers and benedictions, instead of availing them, were to operate as farther curses. Finally, their dead bodies were to be cast aside for dogs and wolves; and their souls to be eternally tormented with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Judas and Pilate, Ananias and Sapphira, Nero and Decius, and Herod, and Julian, and Simon Magus, in fire everlasting.

This was the sentence with which Becket threatened the King, and which he actually pronounced against persons who had acted in obedience to the King and to the laws of their country. If the individual upon whom such curses were imprecated felt only an apprehension that it was possible they might be efficient, the mere thought of such a possibility might have brought about one of the maledictions, by driving him mad. But the reasonable doubt which the subject himself must have entertained, and endeavoured to strengthen, was opposed by the general belief, and by the conduct of all about him; for whosoever associated with one thus marked for perdition, and delivered over judicially to the devil and his angels, placed himself thereby under the same tremendous penalties. The condition of a leper was more tolerable than that of an excommunicated person. The leper, though excluded from the community, was still within the pale of the Church and of human charity: they who avoided his dangerous presence, assisted him with alms; and he had companions enough in affliction to form a society of their own, . . . a miserable one indeed, but still a society, in which the sense of suffering was alleviated by resignation, the comforts of religion, and the prospect of death and of the life to come. But the excommunicated man was cut off from consolation and hope; it remained for him only to despair and die, or to obtain absolution by entire submission to the Church; and in the present case it must be remembered that submission im-

plied the sacrifice of the points in dispute, that is, the sacrifice of principle and justice, of national interests, of kingly and individual honour. There were some parts of Europe, where, if a person remained one year under ecclesiastical censures, all his possessions of whatever kind were forfeited. This was not the law in England, where indeed the usurpations of the Romish Church had been resisted longer and more steadily than on the continent. But the next step after excommunicating the King might be to pronounce sentence of deposition against him : and that sentence, while it endangered him in England, would, in all likelihood, deprive him of his continental territories, which the King of France, who continually instigated Becket against him, was eager to invade.

But there was another measure, even more to be dreaded in its consequences, of which Henry stood in fear. Supported as he was in the grounds of this dispute both by his barons and by the nation, and by the bishops also in the personal contest with Becket, a sentence of excommunication and deposition might have failed to shake the allegiance of his subjects. An interdict would do this by bringing the evil home to them ; for the effect of an interdict was to suspend all religious forms, usages, and sacraments, save only that baptism was allowed to infants, and confession to those who were at the point of death. The churches were closed, no priest might officiate either in public or private ; the dead were deprived of christian burial, and the living could contract no marriages. Of all the devices of the Papal Church this was the most effectual for breaking the bonds of loyalty, and compelling subjects to rise against their sovereign. Expecting that Becket would have recourse to it, Henry took measures of the severest precaution : he gave instructions that the ports should be closely watched, and ordered that if an ecclesiastic were detected bringing over letters of interdict, he should be punished with mutilation of members ; if a layman, with death : and that if such letters reached the country and were promulgated, any priest who in obedience to them refused to perform service should be castrated. In such a spirit was one tyranny opposed by another during those ages of inhumanity and superstition ! Exasperated with the Cistercians of Pontigny for having received the Primate into their convent, he announced that if they continued to harbour him, he would expel their order from his dominions. This angry act gave Becket an opportunity of shewing his generosity by withdrawing, and enabled Louis to wound his enemy's feelings, by despatching an escort to attend

him, and inviting him to choose an asylum in any part of his dominions. He fixed upon the convent of St Columba by the city of Sens, and was received there with public honours.

This was one of the many unworthy acts committed by Henry under the influence of anger, during this long and acrimonious struggle. He acted with more prudence by his ministers, and prosecuted with sufficient policy the appeal which it had been impolitic to make. While a paper war was carried on with bitterness between Becket and the English Bishops, his messengers at Rome were employing golden arguments with a Court, which, in Becket's own words, was prostituted like a harlot for hire. The excommunicated John of Oxford was one of these ministers; for him to have undertaken such a commission implied a confidence in his own dexterity which was not belied by the event. He obtained absolution for himself; resigned his deanery to the Pope, and received it again from his appointment; and persuaded Alexander to depute two cardinals as his legates in the King's continental territories, with full powers to hear and determine the cause, and to absolve the excommunicated persons; thus revoking the legantine power which had been granted to Becket, and annulling all that he had done at Vizelay. The Pope, who had previously ratified these acts, was so conscious of his inconsistency, that when he notified these concessions to the King, he strictly enjoined him to keep the letter secret, and not let it be seen, except in case of necessity. This was not all; the messengers brought back with them the letters which Becket and his friends had written to the Pope, and some of these proved to be from persons of the King's household, who had never before been suspected. In these letters Becket had called Henry a malicious tyrant; but no new discovery could now embitter Henry's feelings toward him.

When the Primate was apprised of this unexpected change in the conduct of the Papal Court, he said, that if it were true, the Pope had not only strangled him, but the English and Gallican Churches also. Its effect was immediately perceived in the treatment of his unhappy kinsmen and dependants who had been driven into banishment for his sake. It was now seen to what motives the liberality with which some of the French nobles and bishops had hitherto supported them was owing; for now, when Becket was deemed to be forsaken by the Pope, their aid was inhumanly withdrawn:—some of these poor people were left in such utter destitution that they died of cold and hunger, and Becket, who in this emergency neither abandoned himself

nor them, implored Alexander to take means for preserving the rest from the same fate. His spirit was one of those which difficulties and dangers seem only to exalt, the same temper, which in prosperity made him violent and imperious, assuming under adverse fortune the character of heroic fortitude. Still, being more statesman than saint, by habit as well as inclination, he exerted now in his own behalf those talents to which he owed his elevation, and which qualified him better for the Chancellorship than the Primacy; he represented to Alexander that Henry's policy was to gain time by prolonging the business till the Papacy should become vacant, and then to make a recognition of the obnoxious customs the terms upon which he would acknowledge his successor. If he succeeded in this, other princes would extort the like emancipation from the Church, her liberty and jurisdiction would be destroyed, and there would be none to restrain the wickedness of tyrants: and addressing to the Pope phrases of supplication which, in Scripture, are appropriated to the Almighty, Rise, Lord, he said, and delay no longer! Let the light of thy countenance shine upon me, and do unto me and my wretched friends according to thy mercy! Save us, for we perish! And he called upon him to clear up his own honour, which was now obscured, though till now it had remained singly inviolate, when all else was lost.

These representations were strongly aided by the King of France, Louis VII. being equally sincere in his enmity towards Henry and his devotion to the Church; and Alexander, emboldened also at this time by a fortunate change in his own contest with the Emperor, restricted the power of his legates, whom he now deputed rather as mediators than as judges. Their task was the more difficult, because Henry was persuaded that Becket had had no small share in instigating the King of France and the Earl of Flanders to make war upon him. Becket made oath that he was innocent:—of directly instigating them, no doubt he was clear; but it is as little to be doubted, that he had exasperated the ill-will of the one prince, and that both had been encouraged by the advantages which they expected to derive from the embarrassment in which Henry was thus involved. From Becket's disposition even less was to be hoped than from the King's: he cautioned them to place no confidence in those Balaams, the English Bishops, and expressed his trust that they would cure the royal Syrian of his leprosy, but inflict merited punishment upon the Gehazis of his train. To the Pope he wrote, "It is by forbearance on our side that the powers of the

world grow insolent, and kings become tyrants so as to believe that no rights, no privileges are to be left to the Church, unless at their pleasure. But blessed is he who takes and dashes their little ones against the stones! For if Judah does not, according to the command of the law, root out the Canaanite, he will grow up against him to be perpetually his enemy and his scourge." In vain did the legates recommend to him moderation and humility, and exhort him to give way for the peace of the Church. He would neither concede the slightest point, nor consent to abide by their judgment; whereas Henry offered to give them any security they should ask, declaring that he would submit to it in every point, if they would render him that justice which the lowest of men had a right to demand. While one party was so intractable, nothing could be done by mediation; their powers did not extend farther, and Henry was so offended at being thus paltered with, that in their hearing he wished he might never again see the face of a cardinal. He came, however, to a better understanding with them before they departed, and when they took their leave shed tears as he begged them to use their intercession with the Pope for ridding him of Becket.

Becket was at this time elated by a brief, wherein the Pope, by virtue of his apostolical powers, annulled the decree of the Great Council at Northampton, confiscating the Primate's goods for contumacy. But this mark of favour was heavily counterbalanced when he received a prohibition from excommunicating any person in England, or interdicting that realm, till the affair should have been brought before the Pope. Henry was incautious enough to say that he had now got the Pope and all the cardinals in his purse, and even to state in his own family what bribes he had given, and how they had been applied. It is not to be believed that Alexander himself was accessible by such means; infamously venal as the court of Rome had become, this was a case in which he had too much at stake, even if his personal character were such as might otherwise warrant the imputation. He would willingly have reconciled the parties; and inclining to one party or the other, as Becket's vehemence and the urgent interference of the French King, or the fair statements and able negotiations of Henry's ministers, prevailed, his own wishes were indicated in the exhortations to humility and moderation which he repeatedly but vainly addressed to the Primate. The King had said to the legates he would be contented with those customs which it could be proved that his ancestors had enjoyed, by the oaths of an hundred Englishmen,

an hundred Normans, and an hundred men of his other continental dominions. If this would not satisfy Becket, he would abide by the arbitration of three English and three Norman Bishops: and if this offer also were rejected, he would submit to the Pope's judgment, provided only that his act should not prejudice the rights of his successors. The Legates conceived a hope that Henry would concede the customs, if by so doing he could rid himself of Becket, and that for the sake of succeeding in this point, Becket would resign his archbishopric; but when this proposal was made to him, he replied the concessions were not equal; the King was bound in duty, and for the good of his soul, to renounce the customs, but he could not surrender the primacy without betraying the Church. And he assured the Pope that he would rather be put to death than suffer himself to be torn while living from his mother, the Church of Canterbury, which had nursed him and reared him to what he was; . . . rather perish by the cruellest death, than shamefully live, while the King was permitted to act as he did without receiving condign punishment.

At length, peace having been made between the two Kings, it was arranged that at the interview between them Henry and Becket should meet. The latter was with difficulty persuaded to this; and though, to satisfy Louis, he knelt to humble himself before his sovereign, it was with an unbending spirit. His language was so qualified as to shew that he yielded not a tittle of the disputed points; and when Henry declared all he asked was that he would then promise, without fraud or fallacy, to keep all the laws which his predecessors had kept in former reigns, and which he himself had formerly promised to keep, the answer still contained the same fatal condition of saving his order: . . . to regain the King's favour he would do all he could without prejudice to the honour of God. Henry did not refrain from reproaching Becket with ingratitude and pride; but subduing this emotion of anger, he addressed himself to Louis, in a manner which, if that monarch had been less blindly devoted to the Papal Court, must have wrought a change in his disposition toward the contending parties. "Mark!" said he, "my liege! Whatever displeases him he says is against the honour of God: and with this plea he would dispossess me of all my rights! But that I may not be thought to require anything contrary to that honour, I make him this offer. There have been many kings of England before me, some who had greater power than I, others who had less. There have been many archbishops of

Canterbury before him, great and holy men. What the greatest and holiest of his predecessors did for the least of mine, let him do that for me, and I shall be satisfied." The whole assembly with one accord declared that the King had condescended sufficiently; even Louis felt, for the time, the fairness of such a proposal, and turning to Becket, who continued silent, asked him, if he would be greater and wiser than all those holy men? and wherefore he hesitated when peace was at hand? The inflexible Primate replied, "It is true, many of my predecessors were greater and better than I. Each of them in his time cut off some abuses, but not all; if they had, I should not now be exposed to this fiery trial; a trial whereby being proved as they have been, I also may be found worthy of their praise and reward. If any one of them was too cool in his zeal, or too intemperate in it, I am not bound to follow his example, one way or the other. I would willingly return to my Church if it were possessed of that liberty which in the days of my predecessors it enjoyed; but admit customs which are contrary to the decrees of the holy Fathers I will not: nor give up the honour of Christ, for the sake of recovering the favour of man."

Becket's own friends were, on this occasion, so sensible of the imprudence . . . if not the unreasonableness and unrelenting obstinacy of his conduct . . . that they prevented him from proceeding, and drew him forcibly away. The opinion that he no longer deserved protection, when it was now plainly seen that his arrogance was the only obstacle to peace, was loudly expressed; and when the interview ended, it was thought that he had irrecoverably forfeited the King of France's favour. So it appeared from Louis's demeanour, who neither visited him that night, nor sent him food as before from his own kitchen, nor saw him on the ensuing day, before his departure. His followers were in despair, expecting to be banished from the French territories. But that conduct which Louis had seen in its true light when Becket was in the presence of his King, and the candour of the one was contrasted with the stubborn pride of the other, assumed a different colour when he reflected upon it in solitude, under the influence of unmitigated enmity towards Henry, and unbounded devotion to the Church. Regarding the Primate, then, as the heroic and saintly champion of a sacred cause, he sent for him, fell at his feet, entreated with tears forgiveness for having advised him to prefer the favour of man before the honour of God, recommended his kingdom to God and him, . . . as to a tutelary being, and promised never to

desert him and his followers. And when Henry, by his messengers, expressed his wonder that he should continue to abet the Primate after what he had himself witnessed at the interview; "Tell your King," was his reply, "that he will not give up certain customs because they appertain to his royal dignity, neither will I give up the hereditary privilege of my crown, which is to protect the unfortunate and the victims of injustice." There was magnanimity as well as error in this conduct; and perhaps Louis himself was not aware how greatly the satisfaction which he felt, in performing a generous part, was enhanced by knowing that it was the surest way to mortify and injure a rival whom he hated.

In this long contention (for five years had now elapsed since Becket withdrew from England), each party had committed acts as unwarrantable as the other could have desired, giving thus just cause of indignation on both sides. The question concerning Becket's accounts as chancellor was altogether slighted by him, as a demand which, but for the Constitutions of Clarendon, would never have been brought forward: nor did Henry press a point which, whatever he might deem of its legality, he knew to be substantially unjust. But there was a demand upon Henry, in which the Church was too much interested ever to relax its pursuit; . . . it was for restitution . . . even to the last farthing . . . of all that had been taken from the Primate and those who had either followed or been driven after him into exile. Henry had declared that he would make no restitution, and had even sworn that all the property which had been seized on this account, he had bestowed upon poor churches. But Becket ceased not to call upon the Pope to use the rigour of justice; and Alexander, whose letters of admonition produced no effect, sent letters of commination now, bidding the King not to imagine that the Lord, who now slept, might not be awakened, nor that the sword of St Peter was rusted in the scabbard and had lost its edge; and warning him that if restitution were not made before the beginning of Lent, the Primate should no longer be restrained as he had thus long been.

Becket waited till the term prescribed, and then, without informing the Pope of his intentions, thundered out his censures against so many of the King's household, that Henry was surrounded by excommunicated persons, and had scarcely one among his chaplains from whom he could receive the kiss of peace. The Bishops of London and of Salisbury, who were among these persons, appealed to the Pope; and Henry, de-

claring that he resented this audacious act not less than if Becket had vomited out his poison upon his own person, wrote to Alexander, complaining that he seemed to have abandoned him to the malice of his enemy, and requesting him to annul these injurious proceedings. His desire now was that Becket might be appointed to some foreign see, and thereby removed from France; such a termination of the dispute Henry would have purchased at any price; if Alexander would do this, he promised to procure for him a peace with the Emperor, to buy over all the Roman nobles of the Ghibelline party, to give him 10,000 marks, and allow him to appoint whom he pleased to Canterbury, and to all the other sees then vacant. He made presents to the Roman barons of Alexander's party, for their interest; and promised large sums to several Italian cities if they could effect it by their interference. The Sicilian court, whose friendship was of the utmost importance to Alexander at this time, was induced earnestly to second these solicitations, and this long contest created hardly less trouble and anxiety to the Pope than to Henry himself. Gladly would he have reconciled the parties, and to his honour it must be said that, though dexterously availing himself of every opportunity to strengthen and extend the Papal power, he acted throughout in a spirit of mediation. But Becket's inflexible temper frustrated all his conciliatory plans. Though Alexander exhorted, entreated, and admonished him to suspend the censures which he had passed, till it should be seen what a new legation might effect with the King, and though he requested it particularly on the Bishop of Salisbury's behalf, on the score of his own long intimacy with that Prelate, who, moreover, had acted not from inclination, but under fear of the King, through the natural infirmity of old age, Becket equally disregarded the advice and the solicitations of the Pontiff, his opinions and his feelings, relying so confidently upon the support of the French King and the system of the Papal Court, that he ventured to treat with this disrespect the Pope himself.

The censures, indeed, produced in England the effect which the intrepid Primate looked for. For the other prelates, though they had hitherto acted in concert with their excommunicated brethren, refused to hold communion with them now, and even, in direct defiance of the King's orders, enjoined all men in their respective dioceses to avoid them, in obedience to the sentence. Becket announced his intention not to spare the King's person if repentance and satisfaction were delayed, and ordered his clergy to stop the celebration of divine service after the Purifica-

tion, if the King should continue contumacious till that time. However, Henry, he said, might affect to threaten, in reality he trembled with fear, seeing the accomplices of his iniquity thus delivered over to Satan. Nothing but punishment could recall him ; and when they were crushed, he might be more easily subdued. In this language did he speak of his sovereign ; and so nearly was he considered in the light of an independent power engaged in hostilities with him upon equal terms, that the common expression which the Pope as well as he himself used for the proposed accommodation, was that of concluding peace between them. The two Nuncios who were now charged with this negotiation required Henry, for the love of God and the remission of his sins, to restore Becket and take him sincerely into favour : till this should be done, they refused to absolve the excommunicated persons. Growing angry in the debate which ensued, Henry turned away, swearing that if the Pope would not grant anything which he requested, he would take other courses. "Sir," said one of the Nuncios, "do not threaten ! we fear no threats, for we are of a court which has been accustomed to give laws to Emperors and Kings."

After long disputation concerning a written form of reconciliation, in which the King insisted upon saving the dignity of his Kingdom, and Becket upon saving the honour of the Church, all mention of the accounts was waived on one part and of the customs on the other. Upon the point of restitution, Becket would have accepted half the amount of the estimated claim ; with regard to the rest, he told his agents, he was willing to show a patient forbearance, because it was expedient that the Church should have something in her power to keep the King in awe with, and to bring out against him, if he should begin new disturbances and seditions. Everything seemed at last to be accorded, when the negotiation was broken off, because Henry would not consent to go through the customary form of giving the kiss of peace ; this he said he could not do, though willing to have done it, because in his anger he had publicly sworn that he would never give it to Becket ; but he protested that he would bear no rancour against him. The Primate was not satisfied with this ; the French King, who desired the continuance of a contest so harassing to his enemy, encouraged him not to accede to any terms without this form ; and the Nuncio admonished Henry to comply with what was required of him, for otherwise repentance would come too late.

The effect of this was not what the Nuncio expected. It

roused the King's spirit, and he sent orders from his French dominions, where he then was, to England, that any persons carrying an interdict thither, should be punished as traitors, and all persons who should act in obedience to it be banished with all their kin, and suffer confiscation of all their goods. He directed also that Peter-pence should be paid into his treasury, and no longer to the Pope; and required an oath from all his subjects to obey these orders. The laity without hesitating took this oath, which was actually an abjuration of obedience to the Primate and the Pope, and was so denominated at the time. The clergy as generally refused, and Becket privately sent over letters to absolve the laity from observing it. . . . But the crisis was not so near as Henry apprehended; the negotiation was again renewed, and an agreement proposed on his part, upon the general terms that each should perform what he owed to the other. Meantime, he was pursuing a business at the Court of Rome, which he had greatly at heart, and which eventually brought about the shocking catastrophe of this long and perplexed drama. For many reasons, he had long wished to have his eldest son crowned,—the surest method he thought of precluding any struggle for the succession after his own death. With this intention he had obtained a bull, while the see of Canterbury was vacant, empowering him to have the ceremony performed by what Bishop he pleased; this bull had been revoked virtually though not directly; now, however, Alexander by his apostolic authority enjoined the Archbishop of York to officiate in this function, as one belonging to his see. It does not appear by what persuasions he was induced to this compliance: but there was a disgraceful duplicity in his conduct; he earnestly desired Henry to keep this permission secret from Becket, and yet shortly after, at Becket's desire, prohibited the Archbishop of York and all other English Bishops from performing the ceremony, declaring it was the privilege of the see of Canterbury. But the ports were so well watched that Becket could find no means of introducing his inhibitory letter, and the Prince was crowned.

In giving the permission, Alexander had carefully asserted the pretensions of the Papal Court, granting, by St Peter's authority, and his own, and with the advice of his brethren, that Prince Henry should be crowned King of England. It was a severe mortification to Becket thus to be defrauded, as his friends called it, of what he had so long sighed for, and to see the Prince, who ought to have reigned by none but him, made King

by another. This was their language, and it shows the entire dependence upon the Church to which they would have reduced the royal authority. He had the farther mortification of learning that the Pope had commissioned his legates to absolve the Bishops of Salisbury and London, calling the latter, whom Becket regarded as the worst, being indeed the ablest of his enemies, a religious, learned, prudent, and discreet man. Becket's indignation at this was unbounded, and using language which he would have been the first to condemn in another, he declared that St Peter himself, were he upon earth, could not have power to absolve such impenitent sinners; Satan, he said, was let loose to the destruction of the Church; Barabbas was freed, and Christ crucified a second time.

This temper was encouraged by some of his friends, who, for the purpose of serving him more effectually, had continued about Henry's person, and communicated to him the information thus treacherously obtained. They advised him to use no farther forbearance, but to pour out his whole spirit, and unsheath his whole sword. "May the eye of God," said they, "look with favour upon you, and the sheep of his pasture; and give his Church the glory of a victory over Princes, rather than an insincere peace with them!" Thus excited, he wrote letters to England, peremptorily placing the kingdom under an interdict;—but here he was baffled, for the letters could not be introduced. He was in this temper, when legates were again appointed by the Pope to effect an accommodation; and he wrote to them, warning them against the artifices of Henry, whom he called "that monster," and bidding them suspect whatever he might say, as deceitful. "If," said he, "he perceives that he cannot turn you from your purpose, he will counterfeit fury, he will swear and forswear, take as many shapes as Proteus did, and come to himself at last; and if it is not your own fault, you will be from that time a God to Pharaoh." The legates however had received wiser instructions from Rome, and everything was now adjusted, except that Henry still objected to give the kiss, by reason of his oath, proposing that it should be given in his stead by the young King his son; and Becket demurred at this, saying the form was essential, as one established among all nations, and in all religions, and without which peace was nowhere confirmed: but that, if he accepted it from the young King, it might be said he was not in the father's favour. To remove this obstacle, Alexander, though unsolicited, had absolved the King from his oath. On a like occasion, Henry I. had re-

fused to consent to such a dispensation, saying, "it was not consistent with a King's honour, for who would afterwards trust to a sworn promise, if it were shown by such an example that the obligation of an oath might so easily be cancelled?" This was too generous as well as too wise a precedent for his grandson to have overlooked, had it been in his power to pursue the same straight and dignified course; but at this time the circumstances in which he was placed were so critical that he deemed it expedient to submit in this point to his imperious subject, desiring only, that as his interview with Becket was to be in the French territories, the ceremony might be delayed till he returned to his own. To this Becket consented, and they met in a meadow near Frettevalle, in the district of Chartres, and upon the borders of Touraine, where the Kings of England and France had held conference on the two preceding days.

On Henry's part no appearance of sincerity was wanting. As soon as he saw the Primate at a distance, he galloped forward to meet him, uncovered his head, and prevented his salutation, by first greeting him. They then withdrew together, as if familiarly discoursing. But Becket's discourse was, by his own account (for no third person was present), far less conciliatory than his manner. He urged the King to make public satisfaction for the great injuries which he had done the Church, and asked, whether, in despoiling Canterbury of her ancient and acknowledged right, he had wished to perpetuate enmity between the Church and her children? He advised him to avert from himself and from his son the wrath of God, and of those Saints who rested in the Church of Canterbury and were grievously injured by this proceeding; he bade him remember that, for many ages, no one had injured that Church without being corrected, or crushed, by Christ our Lord; and he also observed to him, that the consecration of a King, like other sacraments, derived its whole validity from the right of the administering person to perform the office. Becket represents the King as having replied, that Canterbury, which was the most noble of all the western Churches, should be redressed in this point, and recover its pristine dignity in all respects. But he added, . . . to those persons who have hitherto betrayed both you and me, I will, by the blessing of God, make such an answer as traitors deserve. It is much more likely that this should mean those persons who, while they pretended to agree with the King, had corresponded with Becket and spurred him on to extremities, than that Henry should have alluded to the Archbishop of York and

the Bishop of London, as the Primate seems to have understood. For at these words he alighted, and threw himself at the King's feet: Henry also alighted, and ordered him to remount, and held the stirrup for him, and said, "My Lord Archbishop, what occasion is there for many words? Let us mutually restore to each other our former affection, and do one another all the good we can, forgetting the late discord." Then returning to his retinue, he said aloud, that if he did not show to the Archbishop such good will as he had now found in him, he should be the worst of men.

The business of the interview yet remained, after the first, and as it seemed the most difficult, step had been taken. Henry sent the Bishops who were with him, to desire that Becket would now, in the presence of the assembly, make his petition; these messengers advised him to throw himself and his cause upon the King's pleasure; which, as the terms had in fact already been adjusted with the Pope, would have been the wisest and most decorous course. But this he rejected, as the iniquitous counsel of Scribes and Pharisees; and determined, with the advice of his own friends, to submit nothing to the King, neither the question concerning the summons, nor of the sequestration, nor of the coronation, nor of the damages which the Church had suffered in her liberties, and he in his honour. Instead of this, he petitioned by the Archbishop of Sens, that the King would restore the Church of Canterbury with its possessions, and his royal favour, and peace and security, to him and his; and that he would graciously be pleased to amend what had presumptuously been done against him and the Church in the late coronation; promising, on his own part, love and honour, and whatever could be performed in the Lord by an Archbishop to his Sovereign. A very different form of words had been concerted with the Pope; but Henry felt that this was no place for disputing. He may have felt also, that when words were purposely made vague enough to admit of large interpretation, the advantage which they afforded was not to the claimant only. He agreed to all, and declared that he received the Primate and his friends into favour. They passed the evening together, and it was settled that Becket should go to take leave of the French King, and then come to Normandy, to make some abode in the court and near the King's person, that it might be publicly seen into what favour he had been received. When he was about to depart, the Bishop of Lisieux proposed to him, that on the day of indulgence he should absolve the excommunicated servants of

the King, then present, showing thus to others such favour as he and his friends had received. But he evaded this: the persons in question, he said, were in various circumstances, and under different censures, some of which could not be removed without the Pope's authority. He must not indiscriminately confound them; yet having sentiments of peace and charity for them all, he would, by the Divine assistance, manage the matter so to the honour of the Church, the King, and himself, and also to the salvation of those for whom this was asked, that if any one of them should fail of reconciliation and peace, (which he prayed might not happen), he must impute it to himself, not to him. A reply so evasive, and yet at the same time displaying so plainly the unallayed enmity in the speaker's heart, provoked an angry reply from one of the parties. But the King, to prevent any acrimonious contention which might otherwise have arisen, drew Becket away, and dismissed him with marks of honour.

That the King would ever again have received Becket into favour and friendship is not to be believed, because it is scarcely possible; but there is every reason for believing that the reconciliation would have been effective to the great ends of public and private tranquillity, if there had been the same sincere intention of rendering it so on the Primate's part as on the King's. The Primate had concealed his exultation during the interview; but he had scarcely concealed his intention of renewing the contest, and making those who had offended him feel the whole weight of his authority. What his feelings were is known, not by his actions only, but by his own letters; in these, he boasted that the King had not even presumed to mention the royal customs, that he had been conquered in every point, and that in promising to give the kiss, he had plainly shown himself guilty of perjury: the peace, thus obtained, was such as the world could not have given or hoped for; but still the whole substance of it, as yet, consisted only in hope, and he trusted in God that something real would follow. When the Pope, at his request, again suspended those prelates who had officiated at the coronation, he said it was a measure dictated undoubtedly by the Holy Ghost, whereby his Holiness corrected the King's enormities, with an authority becoming the successor of Peter and the vicar of Christ. He was, indeed, prudent enough not to proclaim the suspension which was decreed before the form of reconciliation took place, but he requested that other letters to the same effect might be sent him, in which the injury done to the rights of Canterbury should be the sole cause assigned for

the sentence ; and he asked full power for himself, meaning thereby, power to excommunicate the King, and lay the kingdom under an interdict, if he should think proper ; because, said he, the more powerful and the fiercer that prince is, the stronger chain and the harder staff will be necessary to bind and keep him in order.

Elated, however, and bent upon extremities as he was, there was a secret feeling that his triumph was not so complete as he represented it to be, and something like an ominous apprehension that there would be danger as well as difficulty in the course which he was determined to pursue. His friends in England advised him not to return thither, until he should have well ingratiated himself with the King : his messengers to that country were generally shunned as persons with whom it was imprudent to converse ; and they who had got possession of the sequestered lands manifested a disposition to keep them as long as they could : some committed waste, in a spirit of shameless rapacity ; and one powerful man, who had been enriched with the spoils of Canterbury, was said to have threatened his life if he ever set foot into England. Becket was incapable of fear. He wrote to Henry, requesting leave immediately to go over. "By your permission," said he, "I will return to my church, perhaps to perish for her ; but whether I live or die, yours I am, and will be, in the Lord : and whatever befall me or mine, may God bless you and your children." And announcing his intention to the Pope, he said that he was doubtful whether he was going to peace or punishment, and therefore he commended his soul to his Holiness, and returned thanks to him and the Apostolic See for the relief administered to him and his in their distress.

The delay of which Becket complained was chiefly caused by interested and rapacious individuals. It appears, however, that Henry did not send over positive orders for enforcing the restitution which he had engaged to make ; and in this he was influenced by a suspicion or knowledge of the implacable disposition which Becket still cherished against those who had offended him, and which, indeed, had been but too plainly indicated at their first interview. At their second meeting, which was not till several weeks had elapsed, during which Henry had been dangerously ill, the kiss was not given, though they were then within the King's dominions ; his reception was cold and ceremonious ; expostulations and recriminations passed between them, not without acrimony ; and Henry declared, that before the full restitution which he again engaged to make, he would

have Becket return to England, that he might see how he conducted himself there. When next they met, the King was in a kinder mood, and there came from him an expression which seems to bear the stamp of sincerity . . . "Oh, my lord, why will you not do what I desire? I should then put everything into your hands." The exclamation seems to imply an emotion of affectionate regret that Becket had not co-operated with him in those necessary and beneficial reforms which he had designed, and for the purpose of effecting which he had raised him to the primacy. So Becket himself appears to have understood it; but the King had touched a string to which, in his heart, there was no responsive chord; and an expression which resented of old affection had no other effect upon him than to call up a thought not less arrogant than unprovoked: it reminded him, he says in a letter, of the devil's words to our Saviour, "All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

He had now received from Rome letters, either to suspend or excommunicate at his own discretion the Bishops of London and Salisbury, for having assisted at the coronation; and for suspending the Archbishop of York on the same grounds, the power of relaxing the sentence in his case being reserved to the Pope himself, at Becket's own desire. The Pope was inexcusable in this; the act for which he thus punished these prelates was one which he had authorised them to do: and though he had revoked that authority, the revocation was not known to them when they performed the ceremony. This Becket knew, and the Pope must have known also, if Becket had laid the whole circumstances before him. The farther powers for which he had applied were not granted him. Alexander indeed had already granted but too much. On his way to the court, Becket took leave of the King, who still delayed giving the kiss, and is said to have visibly been careful to avoid it: an apprehension was expressed by Becket that he should see him no more; his eye implied more than the words declared, and Henry hastily answered, "Do you think me a traitor?" He promised to meet him at Rouen, provide him with money for discharging his debts, and either accompany him to England, or send the Archbishop of Rouen with him. None of these promises were fulfilled: political circumstances called the King in a different direction; the money was not forthcoming, and the person charged to attend Becket was John of Oxford, whom he regarded as one of his greatest enemies. The Archbishop lent him £300, and he proceeded on his journey to the coast, believing, as he said

to Louis when he took leave of that monarch, that he was going to England to play for his head.

He was going, in fact, not to complete the reconciliation which had been begun, but to renew the contest, and try whether the regal or the ecclesiastical power were strongest. It irritated him to learn that the Prelates who were the objects of his especial animosity, consistent as himself and upon better grounds, were advising Henry to require, as a necessary condition of his return, that the presentations to benefices belonging to Canterbury made during his exile should hold good; and also that the royal customs should be observed. Resolving therefore to proceed without delay against these Priests of Baal, and standard-bearers of the Balaamites (for thus he called them), he sent the sentence of excommunication before him into England. The law which made this a treasonable act was still in force. It was therefore a dangerous service to convey these letters, but he found a messenger well fitted for such a work, who undertook to deliver that for the Archbishop. This was a nun, by name Idonea, who appears, before her conversion, to have led a dissolute life. The manner in which he wrought upon this fit instrument would be most honourable to him, if it did not belong less to the man than to the age. He reminded her that God had chosen the weak things of the world to confound the strong, and bade her remember Esther; and what, when the chiefs were dismayed, and the priests had wellnigh forsaken the law, a woman's hand had done to Holofernes; and that, when the Apostles had forsaken our Lord, they who followed him to his cross and sepulchre were women. The Spirit, he said, would make those things which the Church's necessity required, arduous though they might seem, not only possible, but easy to her, having faith. He commanded, therefore, and enjoined her, as she desired the remission of her sins, to deliver these letters into the hands of the Archbishop, in the presence of the other Prelates, if that could be effected; otherwise, before any persons who might happen to be with him, and to deliver them a copy of the sentence, and also tell them its purport. "A great reward," said he, "my daughter, is proposed to your labour; the remission of your sins, the unfading truth and crown of glory, which the blessed sinners, Magdalene and Mary the Egyptian, received at length from Christ our Lord, the stains of their whole former lives being wiped out. The Mistress of Mercy will assist thee, and entreat her Son, God and Man, whom she brought forth for the salvation of the world, to be the guide,

companion, and protector of thy journey. And may He, who, breaking the gates of hell, crushed the power and curbed the licence of the devils, restrain the hands of the wicked, that they may not be able to hurt thee! Farewell, spouse of Christ, and think that He is always present with thee!"

The day after this fanatical messenger departed, he himself embarked from the port of Whitsand:* some persons advised him not to venture, after such a measure of direct defiance to the King; but he replied,—“I see England before me, and go thither I will, let the issue be what it may. It is enough that the pastor has been seven years absent from his flock.” He landed at Sandwich, a port belonging to his see, and inhabited by his tenantry; they, he well knew, would receive him with sincere joy, the transfer of church-property to lay hands being always to the detriment of the tenants. His reception was such as he expected; but the nun had performed her unhappy commission, and the Sheriff of Kent, with a body of knights, armed under their tunics, as expecting violence, but not intending it, hastened thither. The people fled to arms to support their lord. John of Oxford interposed, commanding the Sheriff, in the King’s name, to do no manner of injury to the Primate or any of his followers. None was offered; but he was truly told, how by excommunicating the bishops for having done their duty, it appeared that he was entering the land with fire and sword to uncrown the King, and that it would be safer for him to remain on board, unless he took better counsel. From one of his retinue, the Archdeacon of Sens, being a foreigner, they required an oath of allegiance, which Becket forbade him to take, because it contained no saving clause in favour of the Papal and Ecclesiastical authorities. The point was not pressed by the Sheriff, who feared the temper and the numbers of the people. Becket then proceeded to Canterbury. He was met by all the poor and peasantry of the country: sore experience had made them feel the difference between living under an intrusive lord, whose tenure was uncertain, and the regular system of the Church, which was always liberal and beneficent. Hope, gratitude, and personal attachment, led them to welcome him with every demonstration of joy; but the impious application of Scripture must have been suggested by the Priests, when these simple people spread their garments in the way before him, and sung, “Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord!” The parochial Clergy of Canterbury went out in solemn procession

* It is between Calais and Bologne.

to meet him, and finally the Monks received him into their convent, bells ringing, the organs pealing, and the choir echoing with hymns of triumphant thanksgiving.

On the morrow came messengers from the suspended prelates, notifying to him that they appealed from the sentence to the Pope. There came also officers from the young King, requiring him to absolve them from their censures, the act itself being injurious to the King, and subversive of the laws. He replied, "that it was not in the power of an inferior judge to release from the sentence of the superior; though in fact he possessed that power in two of the cases, and would have possessed it in the third, if by his own especial desire it had not been withheld. . . . They contended warmly on both sides, the men with whom he disputed being as resolute as himself. He offered at length, for the peace of the Church, and in proof of respect for the King, to absolve them at his own peril, provided they would take an oath before him to obey the Pope's injunctions in this affair. The Bishops of Salisbury and London, when this was notified to them, were disposed to have consented; but the Archbishop of York observed to them, that it was against the laws to take such an oath without the King's permission; and he declared that, if it were necessary, he would spend eight thousand marks of silver, which he had by him, to restrain the obstinate arrogance of that man. It was their duty and their interest, he said, to be true to the King, and to him he advised that they should go. Accordingly they embarked for Normandy.

Before their departure, they despatched an account of these proceedings to the young King, representing that the end of Becket's conduct would be to tear the crown from his head. Becket also sent to justify his conduct, but his messenger was not admitted to an audience. He then set out himself to see the young King at Woodstock, and to visit his whole province, for the purpose of plucking and rooting out what had grown up in disorder during his absence; that is, to turn out all persons who had been presented to benefices during that time. The clergy of Rochester attended him to London, where the populace received him with acclamations. But on the following morning came an order from Woodstock, forbidding him to enter any of the King's towns or castles, and ordering him to retire with all his retinue within the verge of his church. He answered haughtily, "that believing himself bound in duty to visit the whole of his province, he would not have obeyed the order, had not Christmas been close at hand, on which festival he meant to

officiate in his cathedral." To Canterbury therefore he returned. The Government had shewn more firmness than he had expected. The higher clergy and the better citizens who had gone out to meet him were summoned to give bail upon a charge of sedition, for having thus received the King's enemy. Persons of rank kept away from him; and men who for their own sakes desired to render any accommodation impossible, endeavoured, even at Canterbury, to provoke him and his servants by studied indignities. Becket wrote to the Pope, that the sword of death was hanging over him, and desired his prayers. He told his clergy that the quarrel could not now end without blood, but that he was ready to die for the Church; and in his sermon on Christmas-day, he said to his congregation, that his dissolution was near, and he should quickly depart from them; one of their Archbishops had been a martyr, and it was possible they might have another. And then, in a strain of bold, fierce, fiery indignation (for so his admiring friends and biographers have described it), he thundered out his invectives against most of the King's counsellors and friends, and excommunicated three of his enemies by name, with all the appalling forms of that abominable rite.

Meantime the Archbishop of York and the two bishops had repaired to the father King in Normandy, imploring justice for themselves and the whole clergy of the kingdom. Henry was incensed at hearing what had passed, and observed with an oath, that if all who consented to his son's coronation were to be excommunicated, he himself should not escape. He asked their advice. "It was not for them," they replied, "to say what ought to be done." Indeed, they knew not what to advise, and no evil meaning can be imputed to them for saying, "that there would be no peace for him or his kingdom while Becket was alive." This was the plain truth; and Henry, in his despair of ever being suffered to rest by this ungrateful and treacherous friend (for as such he regarded him), and in his indignation at this fresh instance of unprovoked hostility, called himself unfortunate in having maintained so many cowardly and thankless men, none of whom would revenge him of the injuries he had sustained from one turbulent Priest; . . . words which expressed, with culpable indiscretion, a wish for Becket's death, and were too hastily understood as conveying an order for it. It is certain that no such order was intended; but it is not surprising that men who were zealous in his service, and in no way scrupulous how they served him, should have imagined that what the King

wished, he would gladly have them perform. Reginald Fitzurse, William de Tracy, Richard Brito, and Hugh de Moreville, who were all gentlemen of his bed-chamber, knights and barons of the realm, bound themselves by an oath that they would either compel the Primate to withdraw the censures, or carry him out of the kingdom, or put him to death, if he refused to do the one, and they found it impossible to effect the other; with this determination they hastened to England, unknown to the King or any other person, and unsuspected.

The result of Henry's counsel was the legal and proper measure of sending over three Barons to arrest Becket. These messengers were too late. The ministers of vengeance, who were before them, landed near Dover, and passed the night in Ranulf de Broc's castle, one of the persons whom Becket had excommunicated on Christmas-day, and to whom interested motives for his marked enmity to the Primate are imputable, because he was in possession of great part of the sequestered lands. He supplied soldiers enough to overpower the knights of Becket's household and the people of Canterbury, if resistance should be attempted. They entered the city in small parties, concealing their arms, that no alarm might be excited. The Abbot of St Augustine's, who was of the King's party, received them into his monastery, and is said to have joined counsel with them. About ten in the morning, they proceeded with twelve knights to Becket's bed-chamber; his family were still at table, but he himself had dined, and was conversing with some of his monks and clergy. Without replying to his salutation, they sat down opposite to him, on the ground, among the monks. After a pause, Fitzurse said they came with orders from the King, and asked whether he would hear them in public or in private? Becket said, as it might please him best, . . . and then, at his desire, bade the company withdraw; but presently apprehending some violent proceeding from Fitzurse's manner, he called them in again from the antechamber, and told the barons that whatever they had to impart might be delivered in their presence. Fitzurse required him to absolve the suspended and excommunicated Prelates. He returned the old evasive answer, "that it was not he who had passed the sentence, nor was it in his power to take it off." A warm altercation ensued, in which Becket insisted that the King had authorised his measures, in telling him he might, by ecclesiastical censures, compel those who had disturbed the peace of the Church to make satisfaction; this, he affirmed, had been said in Fitzurse's presence. Fitzurse denied that he had heard anything to

that purport ;—and, indeed, Becket himself must have known that, if such permission had ever been given, it certainly was not in the latitude which he now chose to represent.

The four Barons then, in the King's name, required that he, and all who belonged to him, should depart forthwith out of the kingdom, for he had broken the peace, and should no longer enjoy it. Becket replied, "he would never again put the sea between him and his church." Their resolute manner only roused his spirit, and he declared, that if any man whatsoever infringed the laws of the Holy Roman See, or the right of the Church, be that man who he would, he would not spare him.—"In vain," said he "do you menace me! If all the swords in England were brandished over my head, you would find me foot to foot, fighting the battles of the Lord!" He upbraided those of them who had been in his service as Chancellor. They rose, and charged the monks to guard him, saying they should answer for it if he escaped; the knights of his household they bade go with them, and wait the event in silence. Becket followed them to the outer door, saying, he came not there to fly, nor did he value their threats. "We will do more than threaten!" was the answer.

Becket was presently told that they were arming themselves in the palace-court. Some of his servants barred the gate, and he was with difficulty persuaded by the monks to retire through the cloisters into the cathedral, where the afternoon service had now begun. He ordered the cross to be borne before him, retired slowly, and to some who were endeavouring to secure the doors, he called out, forbidding to do it, saying, "You ought not to make a castle of the church; it will protect us sufficiently without being shut; neither did I come hither to resist, but to suffer." By this time the assailants, after endeavouring to break open the abbey gates, had entered, under Robert de Broc's guidance, through a window, searched the palace, and were now following him to the cathedral. He might still have concealed himself, and not improbably have escaped. But Becket disdained this: with all its errors, his was an heroic mind. He was ascending the steps of the high altar, when the barons, and their armed followers, rushed into the choir with drawn swords, exclaiming, "Where is Thomas à Becket? where is that traitor to the King and kingdom?" No answer was made; but when they called out with a louder voice, "Where is the Archbishop?" he then came down the steps, saying, "Here am I; no traitor, but a priest; ready to suffer in the name of Him who redeemed me.

God forbid, that I should fly for fear of your swords, or recede from justice!" They required him, once more, to take off the censures from the Prelates. "No satisfaction has yet been made," was the answer, "and I will not absolve them." Then they told him he should instantly die. "Reginald," said he to Fitzurse, "I have done you many kindnesses; and do you come against me thus armed?" The Baron, resolute as himself, and in a worse purpose, told him to get out from thence, and die! at the same time laying hold of his robe. Becket withdrew the robe, and said he would not move. "Fly, then," said Fitzurse, as if at this moment a compunctuous feeling had visited him, and he would have been glad to see the intent frustrated, in which his pride more than his oath constrained him to persist. "Nor that either," was Becket's answer; "if it is my blood you want, I am ready to die, that the Church may obtain liberty and peace: only, in the name of God, I forbid you to hurt any of my people." Still it appears that in some, at least, there was a wish to spare his life: one struck him between the shoulders with the flat part of the sword, saying, "Fly, or you are dead!" And the murderers themselves afterwards declared, their intention was to carry him prisoner to the King; or, if that was impossible, put him to death in a place less sacred than the church; but he clung to one of the pillars, and struggled with the assailants. Tracy he had nearly thrown down, and Fitzurse he thrust from him with a strong hand, calling him pimp. Stung by the opprobrious appellation, Fitzurse no longer hesitated whether to strike. A monk—Edward Grimes, of Cambridge, was his name—interposed his arm, which was almost cut off by the blow. Becket, who had bowed in the attitude of prayer, was wounded by the same stroke in the crown of his head. His last words were, "To God, to St Mary, and the saints, who are patrons of this Church, and to St Dennis, I commend myself, and the Church's cause!" The second blow brought him to the ground, on his face, before St Benedict's altar; he had strength and composure enough to cover himself with his robes, and then to join his hands in prayer, and in that position died under their repeated strokes, each pressing near to bear a part in the murder. Brito cleft his skull; and an accursed man, the subdeacon, Hugh of Horsea, known by the appellation of the Ill Clerk, scattered the brains over the pavement from the point of his sword.

CHAPTER IX.

PROCEEDINGS UPON BECKET'S DEATH—KING JOHN—TRIUMPH
OF THE PAPAL POWER.

As soon as Henry was informed that the four Barons had suddenly left the Court and taken the road to the coast, he apprehended some mischief, knowing the characters of the men, and probably remembering also the rash expressions which had escaped him in his anger. Immediate orders for stopping them were despatched to all the seaports of Normandy, but they had found a fair wind, unhappily for all parties, and had thus outstripped pursuit. They looked for no reward or favour for the atrocious act which they had committed. On the contrary, they hastened to Knaresborough, a castle belonging to Moreville, believing that they had rendered the King good service, but not daring to appear before him.

When the news reached Henry, he was at once struck with remorse for the cause of the crime, and alarmed for its consequences. At first, he broke out into loud and passionate lamentations, then seemed to be overpowered and stupified by the violence of his emotions: he put on sackcloth and ashes, and for three days was incapable either of consolation or counsel. At length, by the advice of those who, meantime, had consulted what might best be done in these unexpected and most critical circumstances, an embassy was sent to the Pope, and messengers to Canterbury. The latter were instructed to inform the clergy of that Church, how deeply the King grieved for the death of Becket, and abhorred the murder: to say, that if any guilt attached to him for words rashly spoken in his anger, it might best be expiated by their prayers; and to command that the body should be honourably buried; for, though the Primate had been his enemy while living, he would not prosecute him when dead, but remitted to his soul whatever offences he had committed against him and his royal dignity. This was acting as became him, convinced as he was, that in the grounds of the dispute he stood justified to his own heart, and to his people. If he did not persevere in this dignified and becoming course, it is because a sane opinion may be subdued, though insanity is invincible when the world appears combined against it.

The King of France failed not to improve this opportunity for distressing his enemy. He called upon the Pope to unsheath

the sword of St Peter, and therewith signally avenge the martyr of Canterbury, whose blood, not so much for itself as for the Catholic Church, cried out for vengeance. The Archbishop of Sens, who had been commissioned, with the Archbishop of Rouen, to interdict Henry's continental dominions, if the agreement with Becket were not executed, called upon his colleague now to join with him in so doing : but he replied, that he would do nothing to aggravate his master's affliction ; and he interposed an appeal to the Pope. Upon this, the former, who had been Becket's friend, and seems to have partaken no small portion of his immitigable spirit, pronounced the interdict ; but no regard was paid to this unwarrantable act : the appeal was believed to suspend its force ; and it is probable, that in Normandy there prevailed a fair and temperate opinion, both concerning the dispute, and the death of Becket.

The Pope, like the King of France, regarded the murder as an event which might be made subservient to his policy. It was not till after long and humble entreaties, that he admitted two of Henry's ambassadors to an audience ; and when they saluted him in their master's name, the assembled cardinals interrupted them by clamours, as if the very mention of that name had been an abomination. They obtained a private hearing in the evening ; but though Becket was dead, his cause had not died with him, rather it had acquired tenfold strength : two of his former chaplains, sent by the Archbishop of Sens, appeared to plead against the reconciliation which Henry solicited, and all countenances looked so darkly upon his ambassadors, that they almost despaired of success. Holy Thursday was at hand, . . . the day whereon it was customary for the Pope to excommunicate notorious offenders ; and they were informed, that on that day the sentence passed by Becket against the bishops would be confirmed, the whole of Henry's dominions placed under an interdict, and he himself excommunicated by name. In those days, when men were as licentious upon great points as they were scrupulous in indifferent ones, ambassadors did not hesitate to exceed their commission where any great advantage was to be gained, and pledge their Sovereign to terms which they were far from being certain that he would perform. Thus, to prevent the impending stroke, they assured the Pope that the King would submit wholly to his mandates in this affair : this, they said, they were empowered to confirm by an oath in his presence, and their master would swear to the same effect.

Their object was answered by this unwarrantable expedient ;

and the Pope contented himself, on the dreaded day, with excommunicating the murderers of Becket in general, and all who advised, abetted, or consented to their crime, or who should, knowingly, receive and harbour them. Shortly afterwards, other members of the embassy who had been detained on the road, arrived; these, more scrupulous, refused to take the same oath; upon which the Pope confirmed the interdict which the Archbishop of Sens had imposed, and interdicted Henry himself from entering any church. The intermediate time had not been misemployed, or these measures would not have fallen so far short of what was threatened; in fact, some of the cardinals had been gained over, and money was said to have been largely distributed. The Pope absolved the bishops, whose sentence he had just before ratified, and wrote himself to Henry (a mark of special favour), exhorting him to humility. Everything was thus composed till Urban should send legates into Normandy; and it was plain that an accommodation would then be effected by the disposition which the Pope had thus manifested.

The terms of accommodation were such as saved appearances for both parties. They were, that Henry should give the Knights-Templars a sum sufficient to maintain 200 knights for the defence of the Holy Land, one year: that he should take the cross for three years himself, and go in person to Palestine the ensuing summer, unless it were deemed a more urgent duty to go to the assistance of the Christians in Spain: that he should not prevent appeals in ecclesiastical causes from being made freely, with good faith, and without fraud or evil intention, to the Roman Pontiff; nevertheless, he might require security from any suspected appellants, that they would not attempt anything to the prejudice of him or his kingdom: that he should absolutely give up those customs which had been introduced in his time against the English Church: that any lands which had been taken from the see of Canterbury should be fully restored, as they were held by that see a year before Becket went out of the kingdom; and that he should restore his peace and favour, with all their possessions, to all the clergy and laity of either sex, who had been deprived of their property on Becket's account. Henry also took a voluntary oath before the legates, that he had neither ordered nor desired the murder; but was exceedingly grieved when the report thereof was brought him; yet, he said, he feared the perpetrators took occasion to commit that wicked act from the passion and perturbation which they had seen in him. Other things, the legates informed the Pope, he was to do of

his own free accord, but it was not proper to set them down in writing.

Whatever these secret conditions may have been, the ostensible terms were better than Henry had reason to expect; nothing for which he had contended was, in reality, yielded by them, and the obligation of taking the cross was one from which the Pope would easily release him upon such excuses as were sure to occur. The conditions, which were concealed from public knowledge, related probably to the price which was paid for the Pope's moderation, and perhaps to certain acts of imaginary expiation which the King was willing to perform. For Becket was already regarded as a saint and martyr, and upon this point Henry's understanding was subdued by the spirit of the age. The craft in which Dunstan had excelled, and in which his successors had been no mean proficient, was still exercised at Canterbury with equal audacity and equal success.* The martyred saint, on the morning after he was killed, had lifted up his hand after the service, and given the monks his blessing. His eyes, which had been injured by the blows of the assassins, miraculously disappeared, and were replaced by others, smaller in size, and of two different colours. He had appeared in his pontificals at the altar on the third day, and directed that a verse from the Psalms should, in future, be recited instead of sung in the mass;—and, at his requiem, angels had visibly assisted at the choir. The persons who had been his followers and counsellors asserted these things as eye-witnesses, and affirmed, that upon the spot where he was slain, and before the altar, where his corpse was laid out, and at his tomb, paralytics recovered strength, the lame walked, the blind obtained sight, the deaf heard, and the dumb spake. The ministers who were about the young King endeavoured at first to stop these impudent and impious impostures; but they took no measures for exposing them; and the delusion spread, many being interested to support it, and the multitude, as usual, believing with eager credulity.

So effectually were these frauds practised, and so villanously encouraged by the Papal Court, that within two years after his death, St Thomas of Canterbury was canonised in form, and the 29th of December, being the day of his martyrdom, dedicated to him in the kalendar. It was affirmed, that till the murderers were absolved from the excommunication which had been passed against them, dogs would not take food from their hands;† and that even when they had been released from these censures, upon

* Alford, iv. 220.

† Ibid. iv. 244.

contrition, they remained, as long as they lived, trembling as if with palsy, and disturbed in mind like men whom horror had distracted. What marvel? The martyr himself had said that his blood cried from the earth for vengeance more than that of Abel; and it was revealed that his place in Heaven was higher than that of St Stephen, and of all other martyrs! His brains were sent to Rome; and devout persons at Canterbury were shewn his skull, in one part of the church, and in a chapel behind the high altar, what was said to be his face, set in gold. The Abbey of St Augustine's exchanged several houses and a piece of ground for a portion of his scalp. The rust of the sword that killed him was tendered to pilgrims, that they might kiss it; and a fraternity of mendicants stationed themselves by the wayside on the road to London, where they levied contributions upon pious travellers, by virtue of the upper-leather of his shoe. No arts, no falsehoods, no blasphemies were spared which might raise the reputation of the new shrine above all others in England: lost members were said to be restored there, and the dead, even birds and beasts, restored to life: parallels were drawn between this turbulent, ambitious, unforgiving churchman, and our Lord and Saviour himself; and a prayer was introduced in the service of his day, for salvation through the merits and blood of St Thomas à Becket. These abominable artifices were successful. A jubilee was accorded every fifty years, when plenary indulgence was to be obtained by all who visited his tomb: 100,000 pilgrims are known to have been present at one of these seasons; and at this day it may be seen where their knees have worn the marble steps. The cathedral itself was commonly called St Thomas's; and, in the account of one year, it appeared that more than £600 had been offered at Becket's altar, when at the altar of Christ nothing had been presented.

If at the commencement due vigilance had been exerted, this superstition might have been crushed in the germ, and the exposure of the tricks and falsehoods which were systematically practised might have produced a salutary effect upon public opinion. But the Prelates, who were most interested in the detection of these artifices, were with the King in Normandy; possibly, too, had they been on the spot, the fear of injuring the craft, and the knowledge that they had to make their peace with the Pope, might have withheld them. We should remember also that those disorders over which the imagination possessed any power, were actually healed at Becket's shrine in many cases, and in very many were suspended or relieved for a time; and

they who had witnessed or experienced one such fact were ready to believe any exaggeration or any falsehood; what they knew to have happened was to them miraculous, and therefore nothing could appear impossible. Not having opposed the delusion in time, Henry yielded to it. His sons had taken arms against him; France and Flanders were allied against his continental dominions, and the Scotch invaded England. If Henry himself did not account the death of St Thomas of Canterbury among the evils which had brought these calamities and dangers upon him, such an opinion was professed by his enemies, and likely to have a disheartening influence upon his friends. And as the Pope had authorised and enjoined prayers to the new saint, that he should intercede with God for the clergy and people of England, Henry, either from prostration of mind, or in policy far less to be excused, determined to implore his intercession in the most public manner, and with the most striking circumstances. Landing at Southampton, he there left his court and the mercenaries whom he had brought over, and set off on horseback with a few attendants for Canterbury. When he came within sight of its towers, he dismounted, laid aside his garments, threw a coarse cloth over his shoulders, and proceeded to the city, which was three miles distant, barefoot over the flinty road, so that in many places his steps were traced in blood. He reached the church trembling with emotion, and was led to the martyr's shrine; there, in the crypt, he threw himself prostrate before it, with his arms extended, and remained in that posture, as if in earnest prayer, while the Bishop of London solemnly declared, in his name, that he had neither commanded nor advised, nor by any artifice contrived, the death of Thomas à Becket, for the truth of which he appealed to God; but because his words, too inconsiderately spoken, had given occasion for the commission of that crime, he now voluntarily submitted himself to the discipline of the Church. The monks of the convent, eighty in number, and four bishops, abbots, and other clergy who were present, were provided each with a knotted cord; he bared his shoulders, and received five stripes from the prelates, three from every other hand. When this severe penance had been endured, he threw sackcloth over his bleeding shoulders, and resumed his prayers, kneeling on the pavement, and not allowing a carpet to be spread beneath him: thus he continued all that day, and till the midnight-bell tolled for matins. After that hour, he visited all the altars of the church, prayed before the bodies of all the saints who were there deposited, then returned to his devotions

at the shrine till day-break. During this whole time he had neither ate nor drank ; but now, after assisting at mass, and assigning, in addition to other gifts, forty pounds a year for tapers to burn perpetually before the martyr's tomb, he drank some water, in which a portion of Becket's blood was mingled. He then set off for London, where he found himself in a state incapable of exertion, and it was necessary to bleed him. The believers in Becket have not failed to remark, that on the morning when Henry completed his reconciliation with the canonised martyr, the King of Scotland was defeated and taken.

There is good reason for affirming, that Henry had not changed his opinion either concerning Becket's conduct, or the original cause of their dispute, but his mind was broken by the ingratitude of his children : some remorse he justly felt for the expression of a wish which had led to the murder ; and above all, his extreme licentiousness of life degraded him intellectually, as well as morally, and made him catch at all the substitutes for repentance which the Romish superstition has provided. Some centuries after his death, the terms upon which he had made his peace with the Church were published at Rome ; and an article then appeared among them, whereby he and his eldest son engaged, for themselves and their posterity, to hold the kingdom of England in fee from the Pope and his successors. There were stronger motives for forging such a condition at the time when it was brought to light, than there could have been for concealing it when it was made, and keeping it secret during the reign of his son John. Without such an act of submission, without obtaining even the direct cession of any of the points in contention between Becket and the King, the court of Rome had gained more in England by the progress of the dispute, than it had ever been able to effect against the steadier policy of the Norman kings. For by pursuing a just cause violently and precipitately, through right and wrong, Henry involved himself in such difficulties, that the appeal to Rome, which he would not allow in his subjects, as being derogatory to the royal dignity, was resorted to in his own case, as a resource ; and the authority of the Pope to interfere and determine between kings and their subjects, was thus acknowledged by the most powerful Prince in Europe, for such unquestionably Henry was when this dispute began. And in the case of Becket's canonisation, a more important victory had been gained over the public mind : the cause for which he was worshipped as a saint and martyr, and which Heaven had ratified and approved by a profusion of miracles,

was not the cause of Christian faith or Christian practice, but of the Roman Church ; its temporal power had been the sole point in dispute, and they who venerated St Thomas of Canterbury, as they were now enjoined to do, necessarily believed that the authority of the Pope was supreme on earth.

It is not sufficiently remembered, in Protestant countries, how often that authority (though as little to be justified in itself as in the means whereby it was upheld) was exercised beneficially, and to those ends which form the only excuse for its assumption. An instance of its proper exertion occurred, when Richard Cœur-de-Lion, having been villanously seized, on his return from the Holy Land, by the Duke of Austria, was villanously purchased from him by the Emperor, and put in chains. The indignation which this excited in the other German princes, honourable as it was to them, would hardly have sufficed to obtain his release, unless the Pope had interfered and threatened the Emperor with excommunication, if he persisted in thus wrongfully and inhumanly detaining the hero of Christendom. The fear of such a measure, which might have armed all Germany against him, overcame the feelings of personal hatred, and the base intrigues of Philip Augustus of France, for perpetuating Richard's captivity ; and the unworthy Emperor restored him to his subjects, upon payment of an enormous ransom.

Upon Richard's death, the clergy acted as unjust a part as they had done in raising Stephen to the throne : they assisted in electing John, to the exclusion of Arthur, his elder brother's son ; Hubert the Primate, in a speech which has not unfitly been called a seed-plot of treasons, arguing that the crown was elective, and that the worthiest member of the royal family ought to be chosen. For the former part of the assertion there was some ground ; the right law of succession had often been departed from, and the evil of so doing had been severely proved : the latter position would have excluded the very person in whose behalf it was advanced, for John's character was already notorious ; and perhaps there is no other king recorded in history, who has rendered himself at once so despicable and so odious. The motives for this choice were, the weighty one, of obedience to King Richard's will ; the specious one, that the nobles would be able to maintain their rights against a sovereign of whom they exacted a promise to respect them, and who derived his own right from their suffrages ;—and the wicked one, of the Queen-mother's hatred for her daughter-in-law, the mother of Prince Arthur. The Primate did not live to witness the whole

consequences of this unhappy election, but he saw enough to repent of the part which he had borne in it, as the worst action of his life.

Upon his death, a dispute arose concerning the appointment of a successor. Some of the younger monks of the cathedral assembled at night, and without the knowledge of their seniors, or the King, elected their sub-prior Reginald, a man as indiscreet as themselves, who having sworn as they required, that he would not disclose what they had done without their permission, set off immediately for Rome, to obtain from the Pope a ratification of his appointment. Too vain to keep his own secret, Reginald proclaimed himself for Primate-elect as he went, and the juniors were brought to their senses by resentment: they therefore joined with the superiors, and with the King's approbation, in customary form elected the Bishop of Norwich, who was accordingly invested by John. As, however, it was possible that Reginald might meet with some success at Rome, the King sent a deputation of monks with Elias de Branfield at their head, to represent the case, and obtain the Pontiff's confirmation of the King's choice. A third party also appealed; the suffragan bishops claimed a concurrent right in the election with the monks; and despatched their agent to Rome. Their claim was decided against them, on the ground of a long-established privilege enjoyed by the monks of Canterbury. When the question between the two elected candidates was examined, it was pleaded on behalf of Reginald that the second election must necessarily be null, as being made before the former had been set aside. It became now a matter of casuistry and angry contention, which Innocent determined by declaring that both claimants had been uncanonically chosen, and therefore both appointments were void. He then signified to the deputies that they might proceed forthwith to elect any qualified person, provided he were a native of England, recommending to their choice, Stephen de Langton, Cardinal of St Chrysogonus, and formerly Chancellor of the University of Paris. John, thinking it likely that a new election would be advised, had authorised the deputies to make one, but required an oath that they should re-elect the Bishop of Norwich. They represented therefore to Innocent, that they could not defer to his recommendation without the consent of their master; and that to act otherwise would be contrary to the laws and privileges of him and of his kingdom. Innocent replied, that the consent of a king was not thought necessary when an election was made in the presence of the Pope; and he commanded them,

on pain of excommunication, to choose Langton. Elias de Branfield, with proper spirit, refused obedience; the others reluctantly obeyed, and singing *Te Deum* while they murmured in their hearts, led the Cardinal to the altar.

Pope Innocent III., who thus provoked a dispute with the King of England, was a man of great ability and activity, but haughty and ambitious above all men. The appeal which had been made, recognised his right of confirming or annulling an election, not of making one. Having taken this unwarrantable step, he sent the King a present of four rings, accompanied by two letters. The first was complimentary, and explained the allegorical import of the gift, entreating him rather to regard its mystery than its value; the rings in their round form, typified eternity; constancy, in their square number: their stones also were significant; the emerald denoted faith, the sapphire hope, the garnet charity, and the topaz good works. One was wanting which should have read a lesson of patience; for the second letter required him to receive Langton as the elected and consecrated Primate.

The best cause may be rendered unjust and odious, if it be pursued by violent and iniquitous means. John had a valid reason for objecting to Langton's elevation, because having been bred and beneficed in France, his French connexions and attachments might prove injurious to the interest of England, and of the King's foreign dominions. The Pope's assumption of power also would have been regarded in its true light by the clergy as well as the barons, if it had been resisted with calmness and dignity. But John was one of those men in whom base motives predominate, whatever part they may take. Rapine was the first thing he thought of in his anger; an armed force was sent to expel the monks of Canterbury from the kingdom, or set fire to the convent, if they refused to leave it; and he seized the whole of their effects. Then he wrote a letter to the Pope, which, if it had not been accompanied by the news of this rapacious injustice, was such as became a King of England. It stated his determination to support the rights of his crown, and to cut off all correspondence with Rome, and all remittances of money from this kingdom thereto, if the Pope persisted in the obnoxious measure. The clergy of his own dominions he said were of sufficient learning, and he had no need to look to strangers either for advice or judgment. Pope Innocent replied in the true Papal style. The Servant of the Servants of God informed the King of England, that in what

he had done there was no cause why he should tarry for the King's consent; and that as he had begun, so he would proceed, according to the canonical ordinances, neither inclining to the right hand, nor to the left . . . "We will for no man's pleasure," said he, "defer the completion of this appointment; neither may we, without stain of honour and danger of conscience. Wherefore, my well-beloved son, seeing we have had respect to your honour above what our privileges and duty required, do you in return study to honour us according to your duty; that thereby you may deserve the more favour both at God's hand, and at ours. For this know of a truth, that in the end, He must prevail unto whom every knee of heavenly, earthly, and infernal creatures doth bow, and whose place, unworthy though I be, I hold on earth. Commit yourself, therefore, to our pleasure, which will be to your praise and glory; and imagine not, that it would be for your safety to resist God and the Church, in a cause for which the glorious martyr Thomas hath lately shed his blood."

The Bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester were now charged to lay the kingdom under an interdict, unless the King would admit the Primate, and recall the exiled monks of Canterbury. When they waited upon him and announced the alternative, he swore by God's teeth, that if any one dared interdict his territories, he would send them and all their clergy packing to Rome, and confiscate all their property: and if he found any subjects of the Pope, he would put out their eyes, slit their noses, and in that condition despatch them to his Holiness. They retired trembling from his presence; but after waiting some weeks in hope that some change might take place, in a mind as fickle as it was depraved, they obeyed their spiritual master, pronounced a sentence of interdict, and fled the realm; the Bishops of Bath and Hereford acting with them. Even now, when the ceremonials of worship have been too much abridged, and the public influences of religion grievously lessened by the disuse of all its discipline, and of too many of its forms, . . . even now, it may be understood what an effect must have been produced upon the feelings of the people, when all the rites of a Church, whose policy it was to blend its institutions with the whole business of private life, were suddenly suspended; . . . no bell heard, no taper lighted, no service performed, no church open; only baptism was permitted, and confession and the sacrament for the dying. The dead were either interred in unhallowed ground without the presence of

a priest or any religious ceremony, . . . or they were kept unburied, till the infliction, which affected every family in its tenderest and holiest feelings, should be removed. Some little mitigation was allowed, lest human nature should have rebelled against so intolerable a tyranny. The people, therefore, were called to prayers and sermon on the Sunday, in the churchyards, and marriages were performed at the church-door.

John, with his characteristic recklessness, cared nothing for all this. Had he proceeded temperately at first, the clergy would have stood by him, as they did by his father, and he might have made an honourable, perhaps a successful, stand against the Papal usurpation. But he was incapable of generosity or justice, and the wickedness of his heart corrupted his understanding,—if, indeed, he were altogether free from insanity. He seized all the ecclesiastical revenues, imprisoned the relations of the obnoxious prelates, and defied the Pope. But the sentence of excommunication was hanging over him. He would have averted it by admitting Langton now, but the just condition was required that he should refund the ecclesiastical revenues which he had seized, . . . and this was impossible, for the whole had been expended. Prevented thus from an accommodation when he felt it necessary for his safety, by his own improvidence and injustice, he sought to guard against the dreaded effects of a sentence which was not to be averted; and for this end, he exacted hostages from the family of every baron whose fidelity he distrusted, and required his subjects, even children of twelve years old, to renew their oath of homage.

Some years had elapsed in this miserable dispute, when at length the sentence of excommunication was passed, whereby all persons were forbidden to eat, drink, talk, converse, or counsel with King John, or to do him service at bed or board, in church, hall, or stable: he was declared to be deposed from his regal seat; his subjects were absolved from their allegiance, and the King of France, Philip Augustus, was invited to kill or expel him, and take for his reward the kingdom of England to himself, and his heirs for ever: to which, moreover, a full remission of his sins was added. To aid Philip in this holy war, all adventurers, of all countries, were called upon as to a crusade. These measures were taken at the desire of Langton, and a strong party of the barons, who seemed to think, that as John had received the crown by election rather than descent, they had a right to depose him and choose another king in his stead. There might, perhaps, have been fair cause for setting him aside

as a madman. Had it indeed been known, that the miscreant had actually sent a secret embassy to that powerful chief of the Almoravides, known in Spanish history by the title of the Miramolin, offering to turn Mussulman, and pay him tribute, if the Moor would assist him against the Pope and his own rebellious subjects, it is hardly possible that he could have escaped from the general indignation which would have burst forth.

Philip, who had already dispossessed John of the greater part of his continental dominions, prepared now to take possession of England. But it was not the wish of Innocent that the acquisition which he had so liberally offered, should fall into his hands. Philip Augustus was no submissive son of the Church; and more obedience might be expected from John when he should have been thoroughly intimidated, than from a politic and powerful prince, who was neither likely to shrink from his resolutions, nor to afford any advantages by his folly. A confidential minister, therefore, Pandulph by name, was intrusted with terms of submission, which, if John should accept, he would find the arm of Rome as powerful to uphold, as it was to pluck down. Philip was assembling his forces at the mouth of the Seine; to oppose them, John collected a more formidable host than had ever been assembled in England, . . . an army of sixty thousand knights, . . . who here, upon their own ground, might have defied the world, if their hearts had been with the prince who summoned them. But that unworthy sovereign knew that the bond of allegiance had been loosened, and that at any moment, in obedience to the dreadful voice of the Church, they might forsake him. This well-founded fear was increased by the bold prediction of a hermit in Yorkshire, known by the name of Peter of Pomfret, that before Ascension-day his crown should be given to another. The prophecy appeared of such possible fulfilment, that it obtained a wide belief, and John sent for the hermit, demanding of him in what manner it was to be accomplished—by his death, or his disposal? Peter was not so crazy as to imagine he could answer this question; but he persisted in affirming that when the appointed day arrived, John would no longer be king, and willingly staked his life upon the issue.

Impiety is no preservative against superstition. The day of Ascension was at hand, when Pandulph landed at Dover, and tendered to John the alternative of submitting to the Pope upon all the points for which he had contended, or abiding the event of an invasion. In fear and trembling he affixed his seal to the instrument which Pandulph had prepared, and swore to observe

what he had thus subscribed. But such was the character of this worthless prince, that his signature and his oath were not deemed sufficient securities; and the most powerful of the nobles who were present, swore by the King's soul that, as far as in them lay, they would compel him to perform what he had promised. His humiliation was not yet completed. He still dreaded the French king and his own nobles, and the hermit's prophecy terrified him. The apprehension of death produced a startling thought of eternity; and whether the prophecy pointed at his death or his deposal, if in any way it could be averted, it must be by the authority of the Vicar of God intrusted to his representative. With these feelings, in the prostration of a heart as abject in adversity as it was insolent in power, on the day before the festival of the Ascension he laid his crown at Pandulph's feet, and signed an instrument by which, for the remission of his sins and those of his family, he surrendered the kingdoms of England and Ireland to the Pope, to hold them thenceforth under him and the Roman See. . . For himself, his heirs, and successors, he swore liege homage to that see, bound his kingdom to the annual payment of a thousand marks for ever, in token of vassalage, and renounced for himself or his successors all right to the throne, if the agreement should on their part be infringed. The money, which was delivered in earnest of this tribute, Pandulph trampled under foot, to indicate how little the Pope regarded worldly wealth, and he kept the crown five days before he restored it to John. Peter of Pomfret's prediction had now been fairly fulfilled, and there can be little doubt but that the hope of averting a worse fulfilment had been one motive which induced John to the unworthy act; nevertheless, with the malignity of a mean mind, he ordered the hermit to be hanged as a false prophet, and his son with him.

The deed of conveyance stated, that in subjecting his kingdom to the Roman See, John had acted with the general advice of his barons; and there is reason to believe that they encouraged, if they did not urge, him to a measure by which they expected to diminish his power and to increase their own. Whatever their motives may have been, this act, which now appears so revolting to the feelings of an Englishman, led, in its speedy consequences, to that event which may perhaps be regarded as the most momentous and beneficial in English history, . . . the acquisition of Magna Charta.

Langton, during the preceding contest, had for a time taken up his abode at Pontigny, as if intimating thereby to the King

of England that he was prepared to tread in the steps of Becket. But Langton had neither Becket's singleness of purpose, nor his intemperance of mind. He had been the occasion of the struggle, not the cause; and had so little personal part in it, that he had in no degree rendered himself obnoxious to the nation. It was otherwise with regard to John, who would always regard him as the means of his humiliation, and Langton well knew there was no crime of which that miscreant was not capable. It behoved him therefore to look for protection against his perfidious resentment; and he seems to have thought that this might more certainly be found in the English barons, and in the laws of England, than in the Pope, whose policy it would be to treat his vassal King with condescension and favour. Arriving in England with the other exiles, he proceeded to Winchester, there to absolve the King. John came out to meet them, fell at their feet, and asked their forgiveness. After the absolution had been pronounced, the Primate made him swear to defend the Church and her ministers, to renew the good laws of his predecessors, and especially of Edward the Confessor, and to annul bad ones, to administer justice according to the rightful judgment of his courts, to give every man his rights, and to make full satisfaction before the ensuing Easter for all the damages he had caused on account of the interdict, or in default to fall again under the sentence from which he was now released. The interdict was not wholly to be removed till these conditions had been observed. Langton exacted, likewise, a renewal of the oath of fealty to the Pope.

The business of restitution was not so easy. John ordered commissioners to inquire into the amount of the damages sustained, and report it to the Great Council which had been summoned to meet at St Alban's. He then joined his army which he had collected at Portsmouth, for the purpose of prosecuting the war in France. They had tarried for him so long that their means were spent, and they told him, therefore, that unless he supplied them with money they could not follow him. To do this was, probably, as little in his power as in his will. He embarked with his own household, and sailed, expecting that a sense of shame, if not of allegiance, would make them put to sea after him. But in this he was deceived; . . . they had performed all to which the feudal system bound them; no honour was to be expected under such a leader, and as no feeling of personal attachment towards him existed, they broke up and returned home. The Great Council meantime had met. The Earl

of Essex, Geoffrey Fitz-Peter, to whom, with the Bishop of Winchester, the government had been intrusted during the King's absence, laid before them the terms to which he had sworn; and, in pursuance of his engagement, it was ordered that all injurious ordinances should be abrogated, that no sheriff, forester, or other minister of the King should offer injury to any man, or extort fines as they had been used to do; and that the laws of Henry I. should be observed throughout the realm.

The King had sailed to Jersey; being then convinced that his Barons would not follow him, he returned to England in the bitterness of disappointment and rage, and with such forces as he could collect, marched to take vengeance upon them. The Primate met him at Northampton, and observed to him that his present conduct was a violation of the oath which he had taken. The vassals must stand to the judgment of his court, and he must not thus, in his own quarrel, pursue them with arms. Impatient of such an opposition, and probably astonished at it, John replied, "that these matters did not belong to the Archbishop, and should not be impeded by him;" and the next morning he marched towards Nottingham. Langton followed him, and told him that unless he desisted he would excommunicate all who should bear arms, till the interdict was withdrawn, himself alone excepted. The King had felt the effect of such weapons too lately again to encounter them: he yielded to the threat, and in obedience to Langton, appointed a day on which the barons should appear and answer to his charges.

These events passed in rapid succession, and the Great Council, within three weeks after its meeting at St Alban's, assembled again at London in St Paul's Church. The King was not present; his intention was to demand escuage from his barons, in commutation for the personal service which they had refused to perform: their plea was, that they were not bound to pay it for any wars beyond sea; but he insisted that it had been paid in his father's time and in his brother's, and that it was his rightful due. The consideration that the money raised by the two preceding kings was expended in upholding the honour of England, but that under him nothing but loss and ignominy could be purchased, availed nothing against the validity of his claim: the hope, therefore, of evading this payment became an additional motive for combining to limit those undefined powers which the sovereign hitherto had exercised: and when on this occasion Langton produced a copy of that charter which Henry the First had granted, and which, though

confirmed by the two succeeding kings, had become out of use, and almost out of mind, they bound themselves by an oath to contend for the rights which were there secured to them, and if need were to die in the cause. At this time the Chief Justiciary died: he was a man whose dignity of character commanded respect even from King John; that worthless Prince rejoiced, therefore, at his death, and swore that now for the first time he was lord of England. He lost in him the only person to whom all parties might have deferred, and who might have prevented fatal extremes on either side. But John expected that by help of the Pope he should succeed in curbing all opposition to his will. The Papal Court has ever been equally ready to confirm the absolute authority of devoted sovereigns, and to stir up rebellion against those who resisted its usurpations. Innocent readily espoused the King's cause, but he chose in Cardinal Nicholas, Bishop of Tarentum, a legate unequal to the service on which he was sent. When the question of damages was debated, it was perceived that he acted, not as a just arbitrator, but as one determined upon favouring the King; the act of submission was renewed in his presence, and the deed of resignation was authenticated with a seal of gold and delivered into his hands to be sent to Rome. His policy should now have been to conciliate the Primate and the other prelates; instead of this, he invaded their rights, and, without consulting them, filled up the vacant sees and abbeys, committing also the farther imprudence of promoting persons altogether unworthy of advancement. Upon this Langton required him not to interfere with his jurisdiction, and interposed an appeal to Rome. Pandulph, who was sent to justify the new legate's proceedings, extolled John as a humble and dutiful son of the Church, charged Langton and the bishops with demanding more in reparation than they ought to expect, and accused the barons of seeking to oppress their sovereign, and to curtail the liberties of the realm. With the Pope the merit of obedience was everything; regardless of all other considerations, he supported his royal vassal, and empowered his legate to settle the damages, and withdraw the interdict.

These were minor interests; Langton had stirred a more momentous question, and the barons, for their own security, persevered resolutely in the course which they had begun. They held secret meetings at St Edmonsbury, which they could do without exciting suspicion, because St Edmund's shrine was frequented by pilgrims; and there, before the altar of the saint,

they pledged themselves by a vow, that if the King did not confirm the laws which Langton had laid before them, and grant them the rights which they claimed, they would make war upon him, till they should have obtained their demands in a charter under his own seal. This was about the middle of November. At Christmas, they engaged to present themselves before the King, and make their petition; meantime they were to provide force for going through with what they had begun. Had they failed in their undertaking, this would have been deemed a treasonable compact: such in reality it was; nor were the barons justified by the plea which they appear to have taken as their popular ground of defence, that the King had virtually released them from their allegiance when he surrendered his kingdom to the Pope; for they had themselves consented to that resignation, if not urged him to it. But these things must not be tried strictly by the standard of better times. It was a struggle for power between a bad King and a turbulent nobility; the latter found it necessary to strengthen their side, by conciliating those whom they were in the habit of oppressing themselves, . . . and from this necessity the good which ensued arose.

If there was any man who contemplated that good, it was the Primate. He it was who had raised the storm, and he now stood aloof, the better to direct it. At Christmas, John met his barons in London; their forces were so distributed as to secure themselves, and intimidate the King; and when they required him to confirm the charter of Henry I., and reminded him that to this he had in fact bound himself by oath, when he was absolved at Winchester, he perceived that denial would be dangerous, and therefore required time for deliberation, till Easter. They understood this, and consented to it only when his son-in-law the Earl of Pembroke, the Bishop of Ely, and the Primate, promised as sureties for him, that he would satisfy them at the time appointed. John had no such intention. He, who regarded no oath, employed the interval in exacting new oaths of fealty from his people, fortifying his castles, and raising forces. He also took the cross, hoping to excite the popular ardour for a crusade in opposition to the spirit which the barons had called forth, and perhaps by getting abroad under that pretext, to escape from a contest in which he had no prospect of success.

These artifices were unavailing. In the Easter week, five and forty barons, with two thousand knights, and all their retainers, met in arms at Stamford; they proceeded to Brakesley, in the

direction of Oxford, where the King then was; and at Brakesley, on Easter Monday, the Primate and the Earl of Pembroke met them, and required on the King's part to know their specific demands. They delivered a roll, containing the ancient liberties, privileges, and customs of the realm; and they declared, that if the King did not at once confirm these, they would make war upon him till he did. When their demands were stated to John by Langton, he asked why they did not demand his kingdom also, and swore that he would never grant them liberties which should make himself a slave. Langton and Pembroke represented to him, that what was required was in the main for the general good, and that it behoved him to yield: he was too violently incensed to be capable of reasonable counsel, and the barons, giving their force the appellation of the army of God and the holy Church, commenced war by laying siege to Northampton. Being without engines, they wasted fifteen days before the walls; then broke up, and marched against Bedford, which was delivered into their hands, for the governor was confederate with them. They now were invited to London, with assurance that the gates should be opened in the night, by some of the chief citizens. The gates accordingly were thus betrayed; and the mob, rejoicing in the temporary dissolution of all restraining power, rose against those who were believed to favour the King, and took that welcome opportunity for falling upon the Jews, and plundering them. The possession of the metropolis decided the contest; the other barons being called upon to make their choice, and either join the confederation, or be proclaimed enemies to God, and rebels to the Church, and suffer accordingly with fire and sword, declared in favour of their peers. John then felt the necessity of submission; he met the barons at Runnymede, and there Magna Charta was sealed.*

By this famous charter, the fundamental principles of free government were recognised; and wise provisions were established for the security of the subject, and the administration of justice. It is a charter for which England has just reason to be thankful; but had all its parts been carried into full effect, it would have transferred the actual sovereignty from the king to five and twenty barons, and thus have brought upon the kingdom the worst and most incurable of all governments. There is not one stipulation in favour of the servile class; and this may prove at

* Not signed, as I had said in the former editions. No instrument whatever was signed in those days; and even at present, charters receive no other authentication but from the Great Seal. I am indebted to Mr Palgrave for this correction.

once, that the rights of humanity in that age were not regarded, and that the condition of this class was not such as to excite compassion. The opportunity for determining the limits of the royal and ecclesiastical authorities was not taken ; instead of this, the first article declared that the Church of England should be free, and enjoy its whole rights and liberties inviolable. This language, which left the pretensions of the Church unlimited, may be ascribed to Langton. Perhaps the barons also carefully abstained from requiring anything which might offend the Pope.

But the plain tangible benefits conferred upon the great body of the people by this charter, were such, that in their gratitude they thought God had mercifully touched the King's heart, and that they were delivered, as it were, out of the bondage of Egypt ; for so great had been the abuses which it was now intended to correct, that they promised themselves, from these laws, a new order of things. The King's feelings were widely different ; though to him, had he wisely considered it, it would have been in reality as desirable as to his subjects, except in the fatal stipulation which placed him in reality under the power as well as the inspection of his barons. That stipulation afforded ground for imputing to the barons motives of selfish ambition ; in every other part, the charter was its own justification. Upon this, therefore, the Pope seized, when John, by his faithful agent, Pandulph (for such the cardinal was now become), implored aid against his rebellious barons, protesting that by compulsion only had he yielded to their demands ; and that holding his kingdom as a fief of the Roman Church, he had no authority to enact new statutes without the Pontiff's knowledge, nor in any thing to prejudice the rights of his lord. Innocent looked upon the obnoxious provisions which were presented to him, and exclaimed with a frown, "Is it so ? Do then these barons go about to dethrone their king, who hath taken the cross, and is under the protection of the Apostolic See ? By St Peter, we will not suffer this outrage to go unpunished !" He then issued a Bull, declaring that though England was become a fief of the Papal See, and the barons were not ignorant that the King had no power to give away the rights of the crown, without the consent of his feudal lord, . . they nevertheless, being instigated by the devil, had rebelled against him, and extorted from him concessions to the degradation of the crown. Wherefore, as he whom God had appointed over nations and kingdoms, to pluck up and to destroy, to build and to plant, he reprobated and condemned what had been done ; forbade the King to observe the Charter,

the barons to require its execution, and pronounced it, in all its clauses, null and void.

The Bull being disregarded by the barons, he ordered Langton to excommunicate them. The character of that Primate might have appeared doubtful, if it had not thus been put to an unerring ordeal. He had embarked, but not sailed, for Italy, to assist at the fourth Lateran Council, when Pandulph, and the persons associated in commission with him, communicated to him the Pope's orders; the Pope, he said, had been deceived by false representations, and he desired that the sentence might be suspended till he should have seen him. But when they would admit of no delay, he refused to promulgate it; upon which he was himself suspended from his office. To this injustice he submitted as a dutiful son of the Church, and proceeded on his voyage. At the Council he appeared, not as a member, but as one accused of conspiring against the King, and of committing manifold injuries against the Roman Church. The sentence of suspension was confirmed by the Pope and cardinals, and he was not relieved from it till after the death both of Innocent and John. In the ensuing reign he was permitted to return and resume his functions; and then acting again in concert with the barons, and directing their measures, he assisted them in obtaining from Henry III. a confirmation of that charter, which is to be considered as his work. When we call to mind the character of the old barons, their propensity to abuse an undue power, and the little regard which they manifested to their country in their transactions with France, it can hardly be doubted, but that those provisions in the Great Charter which related to the general good, and had their foundation in the principles of general justice, were dictated by him. No man therefore is entitled to a higher place in English history, for having contributed to the liberties of England, than Stephen Langton. It was no disparagement to him, that he was devoted to the Church of Rome, more than was consistent with the interests of his country; for while, under a sense of professional and religious duty, he was ready to suffer anything in submission to its authority, he resolutely refused to act in obedience to its orders, when he believed them to be unjust, affording thus the surest proof of integrity, and bequeathing to his successors the most beneficial of all examples.

Unhappily it was the tendency of these transactions to strengthen the Papal power, which being alternately appealed to by all parties, found means to establish all its usurpations; and

being withheld by no considerations of principle or prudence, abused to the utmost the victory which it had obtained.

CHAPTER X.

VIEW OF THE PAPAL SYSTEM.

THE corruptions, doctrinal and practical, of the Romish Church were, in these ages, at their height. They are studiously kept out of view by the writers who still maintain the infallibility of that Church; and in truth, that a system, in all things so unlike the religion of the Gospel, and so opposite to its spirit, should have been palmed upon the world, and established as Christianity, would be incredible, if the proofs were not undeniable and abundant.

The indignation, which these corruptions ought properly to excite, should not, however, prevent us from perceiving that the Papal power, raised and supported as it was wholly by opinion, must originally have possessed, or promised, some peculiar and manifest advantages to those who acknowledged its authority. If it had not been adapted to the condition of Europe, it could not have existed. Though in itself an enormous abuse, it was the remedy for some great evils, the palliative of others. We have but to look at the Abyssinians, and the Oriental Christians, to see what Europe would have become without the Papacy. With all its errors, its corruptions, and its crimes, it was, morally and intellectually, the conservative power of Christendom. Politically, too, it was the saviour of Europe; for, in all human probability, the West, like the East, must have been overrun by Mahommedanism, and sunk in irremediable degradation, through the pernicious institutions which have everywhere accompanied that faith, if, in that great crisis of the world, the Roman Church had not roused the nations to an united and prodigious effort, commensurate with the danger.

In the frightful state of society which prevailed during the dark ages, the Church everywhere exerted a controlling and remedial influence. Every place of worship was an asylum, which was always respected by the law, and generally even by lawless violence. It is recorded as one of the peculiar miseries of Stephen's miserable reign, that during those long troubles, the soldiers learned to disregard the right of sanctuary. Like

many other parts of the Romish system, this right had prevailed in the heathen world, though it was not ascribed to every temple. It led, as it had done under the Roman Empire, to abuses which became intolerable; but it originated in a humane and pious purpose, not only screening offenders from laws, the severity of which amounted to injustice, but in cases of private wrong, affording time for passion to abate, and for the desire of vengeance to be appeased. The cities of refuge were not more needed under the Mosaic dispensation, than such asylums in ages when the administration of justice was either detestably inhuman, or so lax, that it allowed free scope to individual resentment. They have therefore generally been found wherever there are the first rudiments of civil and religious order. The churchyards also were privileged places, whither the poor people conveyed their goods for security. The protection which the ecclesiastical power extended in such cases, kept up in the people, who so often stood in need of it, a feeling of reverence and attachment to the Church. They felt that religion had a power on earth, and that it was always exercised for their benefit.

The civil power was in those ages so inefficient for the preservation of public tranquillity, that when a country was at peace with all its neighbours, it was liable to be disturbed by private wars, individuals taking upon themselves the right of deciding their own quarrels, and avenging their own wrongs. Where there existed no deadly feud, pretexts were easily made by turbulent and rapacious men, for engaging in such contests, and they were not scrupulous whom they seized and imprisoned, for the purpose of extorting a ransom. No law, therefore, was ever more thankfully received, than when the Council of Clermont enacted, that from sunset on Wednesday to sunrise on Monday in every week, the Truce of God should be observed, on pain of excommunication. Well might the inoffensive and peaceable part of the community (always the great, but in evil times the inert, and therefore the suffering part) regard, with grateful devotion, a power, under whose protection they slept four nights of the week in peace, when otherwise they would have been in peril every hour. The same power by which individuals were thus benefited, was not unfrequently exercised in great national concerns; if the monarch were endangered or oppressed either by a foreign enemy, or by a combination of his barons, here was an authority to which he could resort for an effectual interposition in his behalf; and the same shield was extended over the

vassals, when they called upon the Pope to defend them against a wrongful exertion of the sovereign power.

Wherever an hierarchal government, like that of the Lamas, or the Dairis of Japan, has existed, it would probably be found, could its history be traced, to have been thus called for by the general interest. Such a government Hildebrand would have founded. Christendom, if his plans had been accomplished, would have become a federal body, the kings and princes of which should have bound themselves to obey the Vicar of Christ, not only as their spiritual, but their temporal lord; and their disputes, instead of being decided by the sword, were to have been referred to a Council of Prelates annually assembled at Rome. Unhappily, the personal character of this extraordinary man counteracted the pacific part of his schemes; and he became the firebrand of Europe, instead of the peace-maker. If, indeed, the Papal chair could always have been occupied by such men as S. Carlo Borromeo, or Fenelon, and the ranks of the hierarchy throughout all Christian kingdoms always have been filled, as they ought to have been, by subjects chosen for their wisdom and piety, such a scheme would have produced as much benefit to the world as has ever been imagined in Utopian romance, and more than it has ever yet enjoyed under any of its revolutions. But to suppose this possible, is to pre-suppose the prevalence of Christian principles to an extent which would render any such government unnecessary, . . . for the kingdom of heaven would then be commenced on earth.

That authority, to which the Church could lay no claim for the purity of its members, it supported by its arrogant pretensions, availing itself of all notions, accidents, practices, and frauds, from which any advantage could be derived, till the whole monstrous accumulation assumed a coherent form, which well deserves to be called the Mystery of Iniquity. The Scriptures, even in the Latin version, had long become a sealed book to the people; and the Roman See, in proportion as it extended its supremacy, discouraged or proscribed the use of such vernacular versions as existed. This it did, not lest the ignorant and half-informed should mistake the sense of Scripture, nor lest the presumptuous and the perverse should deduce new errors in doctrine, and more fatal consequences in practice, from its distorted language; but in the secret and sure consciousness, that what was now taught as Christianity was not to be found in the written word of God. In maintenance of the dominant system, Tradition, or the Unwritten Word, was set up. This had been

the artifice of some of the earliest heretics, who, when they were charged with doctrines not according to Scripture, affirmed that some things had been revealed which were not committed to writing, but were orally transmitted down. The Pharisees, before them, pleaded the same supposititious authority for the formalities which they superadded to the Law, and by which they sometimes superseded it, "making the word of God of none effect," as our Saviour himself reproached them. And upon this ground the Romish Clergy justified all the devices of man's imagination with which they had corrupted the ritual and the faith of the Western Church.

One of the earliest corruptions grew out of the reverence which was paid to the memory of departed saints. Hence there arose a train of error and fraud which ended in the grossest creature-worship. Yet in its origin, this was natural and salutary. He whose heart is not excited upon the spot which a martyr has sanctified by his sufferings, or at the grave of one who has largely benefited mankind, must be more inferior to the multitude in his moral, than he can possibly be raised above them in his intellectual nature. In other cases, the sentiment is acknowledged, and even affected when it is not felt: wherefore then should we hesitate at avowing it where a religious feeling is concerned? Could the Holy Land be swept clean of its mummeries and superstitions, the thoughts and emotions to be experienced there would be worth a pilgrimage. But it is the condition of humanity, that the best things are those which should most easily be abused. The prayer which was preferred with increased fervency at a martyr's grave, was at length addressed to the martyr himself; virtue was imputed to the remains of his body, the rags of his apparel, even to the instruments of his suffering; relics were required as an essential part of the Church furniture; it was decreed that no church should be erected unless some treasures of this kind were deposited within the altar, and so secured there, that they could not be taken out without destroying it: it was made a part of the service to pray through the merits of the Saint whose relics were there deposited, and the priest, when he came to this passage, was enjoined to kiss the altar.

There is unquestionably a natural tendency in the human mind toward this form of superstition. It prevailed among the Greeks and Romans, though in a less degree; it is found among the Eastern nations; and the Mahommedans, though they condemned and despised it at first, gradually fell into it themselves.

But nowhere has it been carried to so great a length as in the Roman Church. The clergy, presuming upon the boundless credulity of mankind, profited by it in those ages with the utmost hardihood of fraud, and with a success at which they themselves must sometimes have been astonished. For it is not more certain that these relics in most cases were fictitious, than that in many instances cures, which both to priests and patient must have appeared plainly miraculous, were wrought by faith in them. Sometimes, also, accident accredited this kind of superstition. If a corpse were found which, owing to the nature of the soil wherein it was laid, or to any other natural cause, had not undergone decomposition, but retained in some degree the semblance of life, this was supposed to be an indication of sanctity, confirming, by the incorruption of the saint, the important and consolatory truth of the resurrection of the body. In these cases no deceit is to be suspected. Perhaps, too, the opinion that the relics of the holy dead were distinguished by a peculiar fragrance, may have arisen from embalmed bodies: at first, it might honestly have obtained among the clergy; but when they saw how willingly it was received by the people, whenever a new mine of relics was opened, it was easy to take care that the odour of sanctity should not be wanting.

At one time, relics or entire bodies used to be carried about the country and exhibited to the credulous multitude; but this gainful practice gave occasion to such scandalous impostures that it was at length suppressed. What was still encouraged is sufficiently disgraceful to the Romanists. The bodies of their Saints are even now exposed in their churches; some dried and shrivelled, others reduced to a skeleton, clothed either in religious habits, or in the most gorgeous garments, . . . a spectacle as ghastly as the superstition itself is degrading. The poor fragments of mortality, a skull, a bone, or the fragment of a bone, a tooth, or a tongue, were either mounted or set, according to the size, in gold and silver, deposited in costliest shrines of the finest workmanship, and enriched with the most precious gems. Churches soon began to vie with each other in the number and variety of these imaginary treasures, which were sources of real wealth to their possessors. The instruments of our Lord's crucifixion were shewn (the spear and the cross having, so it was pretended, been miraculously discovered), the clothes wherein he was wrapped in infancy, the manger in which he was laid, the vessels in which he converted water into wine at the marriage feast, the bread which he brake at the last supper, his

vesture for which the soldiers cast lots. Such was the impudence of Romish fraud, that portions were produced of the burning* bush, of the manna which fell in the wilderness, of Moses's rod and Samson's honeycomb, of Tobit's fish, of the blessed Virgin's milk, and of our Saviour's blood! Enormous prices were paid by sovereigns for such relics; it was deemed excusable, not to covet merely, but to steal them; and if the thieves were sometimes miraculously punished, they were quite as often enabled by miracle to effect the pious robbery, and bring the prize in triumph to the church for which it was designed. In the rivalry of deceit which the desire of gain occasioned, it often happened that the head of the same saint was shewn in several places, each Church insisting that its own was genuine, and all appealing to miracles as the test. Sometimes the dispute was accommodated in a more satisfactory manner, by asserting a miraculous multiplication, and three whole bodies of one person have been shewn; the dead saint having tripled himself, to terminate a dispute between three churches at his funeral! The catacombs at Rome were an inexhaustible mine of relics. But the hugest fraud of this kind that was ever practised was, when the contents of a whole cemetery were brought forth as the bones of eleven thousand British virgins, all bound from Cornwall, to be married in Armorica, carried by tempests up the Rhine to the city of Cologne, and there martyred by an army of Huns under Attila. Even this legend obtained credit; all parts of Christendom were eager to acquire a portion of the relics, and at this day a church may be seen at Cologne, literally lined with the bones!

With the reverence which was paid to relics, arising thus naturally at first, and converted by crafty priests into a source of lucre, Saint-worship grew up. If such virtue resided in their earthly and perishable remains, how great must be the power wherewith their beatified spirits were invested in heaven! The Greeks and Romans attributed less to their demigods, than the Catholic Church has done to those of its members who have received their apotheosis. They were invoked as mediators between God and man; individuals claimed the peculiar protection of those whose names they had received in baptism, and towns and kingdoms chose each their tutelary saint. But though every saint was able to avert all dangers, and heal all maladies, each was supposed to exert his influence more particularly in some specific one, which was determined by the circumstances

* Dugdale, i. 225. This was shewn at Exeter, with a piece of the manger in which the infant Saviour was laid, and a piece of the table at which the Last Supper was eaten.

of his life or martyrdom, the accidental analogy of a name, or by chance and custom, if these shadows of a cause were wanting. The virtue which they possessed they imparted to their images, in which indeed it was affirmed that they were really and potentially* present, partaking of ubiquity in their beatitude. For the monks and clergy promoted every fantastic theory, and every vulgar superstition, that could be made gainful to themselves; and devised arguments for them which they maintained with all the subtleties of scholastic logic. Having thus introduced a polytheism little less gross than that of the heathens, and an actual idolatry, they hung about their altars (as had also been the custom in heathen temples) pictures recording marvellous deliverances, and waxen models of the diseased or injured parts, which had been healed by the saint to whose honour they were there suspended. Cases enough were afforded by chance and credulity, as well as by impostors of a lower rank; and the persons by whom this practice was encouraged, were neither scrupulous on the score of† decency nor of truth. Church vied with church, and convent with convent, in the reputation of their wonder-working images, some of which were pretended to have been made without hands, and some to have descended from Heaven! But the rivalry of the monastic orders was shewn in the fictions wherewith they filled the histories of their respective founders and worthies. No language can exaggerate the enormity of the falsehoods which were thus promulgated, nor the spirit of impious audacity in which they were conceived; yet some of the most monstrous and most palpably false, received the full sanction of the Papal authority; the superstitions founded upon them were legitimated by Papal Bulls; and festivals in commemoration of miracles which never happened,—nay, worse than this,—of the most blasphemous and flagitious‡ impostures, were appointed in the Romish kalendar, where at this day they hold their place.

While the monastic orders contended with each other in exaggerating the fame of their deified patriarchs, each claimed the Virgin Mary for its especial patroness. Some peculiar favour she had bestowed upon each. She had appointed their rule of life, or devised the pattern of their habit; or enjoined them some new practice of devotion, or granted them some singular

* Lewis's Life of Pecoek, 79. Medrano. Rosetum Theologicum quoted.

† The curious reader is referred to Sir Thomas More's *Dialogue*, for an example of the scandalous practices arising from

this superstition. St Valory's, in Picardy, was the scene: p. 76. Ed. 1530.

‡ For example, the five wounds of St. Francis.

privilege. She had espoused their founder with a ring, or fed him like a babe at her breast!—(it is fitting and necessary that this abominable system of imposture should be displayed):—and each of the popular orders had been assured by revelation, that the place in Heaven for its departed members was under her skirts. All therefore united in elevating her to the highest rank in the mythology of the Romish Church, for so in strict truth must this enormous system of fable be designated. They traced her in types throughout the Old Testament: she was the tree of life; the ladder which Jacob had seen leading from heaven to earth; the ever-burning bush; the ark of the covenant; the rod which brought forth buds and blossoms, and produced fruit; the fleece upon which alone the dew of heaven descended. Before all creatures and all ages, she was conceived in the Eternal Mind; and when the time appointed for her mortal manifestation was come, she of all human kind alone was produced without the taint of human frailty. And though indeed, being subject to death, she paid the common tribute of mortality, . . . yet having been born without sin, she expired without suffering, and her most holy body, too pure a thing to see corruption, was translated immediately to heaven, there to be glorified, and enthroned higher than all saints and than all orders of angels. This bodily translation had been presumed, because, had her remains existed upon earth, it was not to be believed but that so great a treasure would have been revealed to some or other of so many saints, who were worthy to have been made the means of enriching mankind by the discovery; and that all doubt might be removed, the fact was stated by the Virgin herself to St Antonio. Her image was to be found in every church throughout Christendom; and she was worshipped under innumerable appellations, . . . devotees believing that the one which they particularly affected, was that to which the object of their adoration most willingly inclined her ear. As an example of the falsehoods by which this superstition was kept up, it may suffice to mention the brave legend of Loretto, where the house in which the Virgin lived at Nazareth is still shewn, as having been carried there by four angels. The story of its arrival, and how it had been set down twice upon the way, and how it was ascertained to be the genuine house, both by miracles, and by the testimony of persons sent to examine the spot where it was originally built, and to measure the foundations, . . . received the sanction of successive Popes, and was printed in* all lan-

* I have seen it in Welsh, brought from Loretto.

guages, for pilgrims of every Christian nation, who were attracted thither by the celebrity of the shrine, and by the indulgences promised to those who should visit it in devotion.

By such representations and fables, the belief of the people became so entirely corrupted, that Christ, instead of being regarded as our Mediator and Redeemer, appeared to them in the character of a jealous God, whom it behoved them to propitiate through the mediation of his Virgin Mother, for through her alone could mercy and salvation be obtained. Prayers were addressed to her as our life and hope, our advocate and mediatrix, who was to reconcile us to her Son. The Pantheon, which Agrippa had dedicated to Jupiter and all the gods, was by the Pope, who converted it into a Church, inscribed to the blessed Virgin and all the Saints. Nor was it in idolatry, polytheism, and creature-worship alone, that the resemblance was apparent between the religion of Pagan and of Papal Rome. The Priests of the Roman Church had gradually fallen into many of the rites and ceremonies of their heathen predecessors, profiting in some cases by what was useful, in others not improperly conforming to what was innocent, but in too many points culpably imitating pernicious and abominable usages. The incense which was employed in Christian Churches, as profusely as it had been in honour of the discarded gods, was grateful, and perhaps salutary; the lamps, which burnt perpetually before the altar, an allowable mark of reverence to the place; the holy water, to be censured, not as symbolical in its use of that inward purification which is required, but for the purposes of gross superstition to which it was so easily abused. The open shrine, and the rustic chapel give a character of humanity to the wild, of religion to the cultivated, country; they are good in their intention, and in their uses; and it is only to be desired that the Romish saints which are there installed, as they have superseded the objects of earlier idolatry, shall themselves be removed, and the Cross alone be seen there.

Some, even of the reprehensible resemblances between Popery and Paganism, were accidental, having arisen in both from the excess and misdirection of the same natural feelings. But the greater number arose from a desire of accommodating the new profession of the converts to their old ceremonies, and of investing the clergy with the authority and influence possessed by the Pagan priesthood. Both motives led to the toleration of customs which ought not to have been permitted, to the introduction of ceremonials more burthensome than those of the ritual law which had been abrogated, and to the adoption of so many out-

ward and visible signs of Paganism, that, had it not been for the Cross, the appearances of the old system would have predominated. The change meantime which took place in the spirit of the religion thus strangely corrupted, was not less remarkable than that which had been effected in its forms. To trace this worse deterioration, it will be necessary to look back upon the earlier ages of the Church.

Britain has the credit or discredit (whichever it may be deemed) of having given birth to Pelagius, the most remarkable man of whom Wales can boast, and the most reasonable of all those men whom the ancient Church has branded with the note of heresy. He erred, indeed, in denying that there is an original taint in human nature, . . . a radical infirmity, . . . an innate and congenital disease, . . . to the existence whereof the heart of every one, who dares to look into his own, bears unwilling but unerring testimony; a perilous error this, and the less venial, because it implies a want of that humility which is the foundation of wisdom, as well as of Christian virtue. But he vindicated the goodness of God, by asserting the free-will of man; and he judged more sanely of the Creator than his triumphant antagonist, St. Augustine,* who, retaining too much of the philosophy which he had learnt in the Manichean school, infected with it the whole Church during many centuries, and afterwards divided both the Protestant and the Catholic world. Augustine is too eminent a man to be named without respect; but of all those ambitious spirits, who have adulterated the pure doctrines of revelation with their own opinions, he perhaps is the one who has produced the widest and the most injurious effects.

Augustine was victorious in the controversy: his indeed was the commanding intellect of that age. . . . The opinions of Pelagius were condemned, but it was not possible to suppress them; and the errors of both soon became so curiously blended, that it would be difficult to say which predominated in the preposterous consequences to which their union led. From the African theologian, more than from any other teacher, the notion of the absolute wickedness of human nature was derived; and the tenet of two hostile principles in man, which had led to such extravagancies among the Eastern Christians, was established in the Western Church. Through the British

* "When Pelagius had puddled the stream," says Jeremy Taylor, "St Austin was so angry, that he stamped and disturbed it more." (Vol. ix. 396.) "Whoever shall think himself bound to believe all that this excellent man wrote, will

not only find it impossible he should, but will have reason to say, that zeal against an error is not always the best instrument to find out truth." (Vol. ix. p. 399.)

heresiarch, the more reasonable opinion, that the actions of good men were meritorious in themselves, obtained. Cassian, whose collations were the great fount of monastic legislation in Europe, held that modified scheme, which has been called the Semi-Pelagian. But with him, and with the monks, the opinion ceased to be reasonable: the extremes were made to meet: and the practical consequences, deduced from the monkish doctrine of merits, coalesced perfectly with the Manichean principle, which had now taken root in the corruptions of Christianity.

The Romish Church did with the religion of the Roman world, what Rome itself had done with the kingdoms and nations over whom it extended its dominion; it subdued and assimilated them: and as the conquered people were in most parts raised in civilisation by their conquerors, so of the ceremonies which the Church borrowed from Paganism, some were spiritualised, and others ennobled by the adoption. Even idolatry was, in some degree, purified; and gained in sentiment, more than it lost in the degradation of the arts.

But it was otherwise when Christianity combined with the philosophy of the Orientals. Dualism, among the early Persians first, and afterwards by Manes, (the most creative of enthusiasts or impostors), had been wrought into a wild imaginative scheme of allegorical mythology. The Christians, when it crept into their creed, were more in earnest; and they founded upon it a system as terrible in practice, as it was monstrous in theory. They believed that the war of the Two Principles existed in every individual, manifesting itself in the struggle between the flesh and the spirit. The flesh therefore was a mortal enemy, whom it behoved the spirit, as it valued its own salvation, to curb and subdue by unremitting severity, and to chastise as a vicious and incorrigible slave, always mutinous and ready to rebel.

The consequences of this persuasion brought into full view the weakness and the strength of human nature. In some respects, they degraded it below the beasts; in others, they elevated it almost above humanity. They produced at the same time, and in the same persons, the most intense selfishness and the most astonishing self-sacrifice, . . . so strangely were the noblest feelings and the vilest superstition blended in this corrupt and marvellous mixture of revealed truth and the devices of man's insane imagination. The dearest and holiest ties of nature and society were set at nought, by those who believed

that the way to secure their own salvation was to take upon themselves the obligations of a monastic life. They regarded it as a merit to renounce all intercourse with their nearest friends and kin; and being by profession dead to the world, rendered themselves, by a moral suicide, dead in reality to its duties and affections. For the sake of saving their own souls, or of attaining a higher seat in the kingdom of heaven, they sacrificed, without compunction, the feelings, and as far as depended upon them, the welfare and happiness of wife, parent, or child: yet when the conversion of others was to be promoted, these very persons were ready to encounter any danger, and to offer up their lives with exultation as martyrs. The triumph of the will over the body was indeed complete; but it triumphed over the reason also; and enthusiasts, in order to obtain heaven, spent their lives, not in doing good to others, but in inflicting the greatest possible quantity of discomfort and actual suffering upon themselves.

In pursuance of this principle, practices not less extravagant than those of the Indian Yogues, and more loathsome, were regarded as sure indications of sanctity. It was deemed meritorious to disfigure the body by neglect and filth, to extenuate it by fasting and watchfulness, to lacerate it with stripes, and to fret the wounds with cilices of horsehair. Linen was proscribed among the monastic orders; and the use of the warm bath, which, being not less conducive to health than to cleanliness, had become general in all the Roman provinces, ceased throughout Christendom, because, according to the morality of the monastic school, cleanliness itself was a luxury, and to procure it by pleasurable means was a positive sin. The fanatics in Europe did not, indeed, like their predecessors in Syria and Egypt, cast off all clothing, and by going on all-fours, reduce themselves to a likeness with beasts, as far as self-degradation could effect it, in form and appearance, as well as in their manner of life; but they devised other means of debasing themselves, almost as effectual. There were some saints who never washed themselves, and made it a point of conscience never to disturb the vermin, who were the proper accompaniments of such sanctity; in as far as they occasioned pain while burrowing, or at pasture, they were increasing the stock of the aspirant's merits, that treasure which he was desirous of laying up in heaven; and he thought it unjust to deprive his little progeny of their present paradise,* seeing they had no other to

* This is related of no less a person than Bellarmine; *Aikin's Gen. Biography*.

expect! The act of eating they made an exercise of penance, by mingling whatever was most nauseous with their food; and it would literally sicken the reader, were the victories here to be related which they achieved over the reluctant stomach, and which, with other details of sanctimonious nastiness, are recorded in innumerable Roman Catholic books, for edification and example! They bound chains round the body, which eat into the flesh; or fastened graters upon the breast and back; or girded themselves with bandages of bristles intermixed with points of wire. Cases of horrid self-mutilation were sometimes discovered; and many perished by a painful and lingering suicide, believing that, in the torments which they inflicted upon themselves, they were offering an acceptable sacrifice to their Creator. Some became famous for the number of their daily genuflections; others for immersing themselves to the neck in cold water during winter, while they recited the Psalter. The English saint, Simon Stock, obtained his name and his saintship for passing many years in a hollow tree. St Dominic,* the Cuirassier, was distinguished for his iron dress, and for flogging himself, with a scourge in each hand, day and night; and the blessed Arnulph of Villars, in Brabant, immortalised himself by inventing, for his own use, an under-waistcoat of hedgehog-skins, of which it appears five were required for the back, six for the front and sides.

The strength of the will was manifested in these aberrations of reason, as prodigiously as strength of body is sometimes displayed in madness; nor can it be doubted, that these fanatics, amid their pain, derived pleasure as well from the pride of voluntary endurance, as from the anticipation of their reward in heaven. The extremes of humiliation and debasement produced also a pride and self-sufficiency not less extravagant in their kind. They whose austerities were the most excessive, were regarded by the people as living saints, and exhibited as such by other members of the community, who had the same belief, but not the same fervour; or who, not having the same sincerity, considered only in what manner the madness of their fellows might be turned to advantage.

There prevailed an opinion, industriously promoted by the priesthood, which was excellently adapted to this purpose. Heroic piety, such as that of the saints, was not indispensable for

* I have given an account of this saint in the *Quarterly Review*, vol. xxii. p. 79. And the reader who is desirous of seeing another example, not less

curious, of Roman Catholic superstition in its excess, is referred to the sketch of P. Joam d'Almeida's life, in my *History of Brazil*, vol. ii. p. 684.

salvation ; the degree of faith and good works without which a soul could not be saved, must be at a standard which all mankind can reach. This was not to be denied. Here then was a large and accumulating fund of good works, which though supererogatory in the saints, were nevertheless not to be lost. But indeed, if strictly considered, all human merits were in this predicament. Atonement having once been made for all, good works, in those who entitled themselves to the benefit of the covenant, were needful only as the evidence and fruits of a saving faith. There was however some use for them. The redemption which had been purchased for fallen man was from eternal punishment only ; sin was not, therefore, to go unpunished, even in repentant sinners who had confessed and received absolution. The souls of baptised children, it was held, passed immediately to heaven ; but for all others, except the few who attained to eminent holiness in their lives, Purgatory was prepared ; a place, according to the popular belief, so near the region of everlasting torments, though separated from it, that the same fire pervaded both ; acting indeed to a different end, and in different degrees, but, even in its mildest effect, inflicting sufferings more intense than heart could think, or tongue express, and enduring for a length of time which was left fearfully indefinite. Happily for mankind, the authority of the Pope extended over this dreadful place. The works of supererogation were at his disposal, and this treasury was inexhaustible, because it contained an immeasurable and infinite store derived from the atonement. One drop of the Redeemer's blood being sufficient to redeem the whole human race, the rest which had been shed during the passion was given as a legacy, to be applied in mitigation of Purgatory, as the popes in their wisdom might think fit. So they, in their infallibility, declared, and so the people believed ! The popes were liberal of this treasure. If they wished to promote a new practice of devotion, or encourage a particular shrine, they granted to those who should perform the one, or visit the other, an indulgence, that is, a dispensation for so many years of Purgatory ; sometimes for shorter terms, but often by centuries, or thousands of years, and in many cases, the indulgence was plenary, . . . a toll-ticket entitling the soul to pass scot-free.

All persons, however, could not perform pilgrimages ; and even the accommodating device of the Church, which promised large indulgences for saying certain prayers before the engraved portrait of a miraculous image, was liable, in numerous instances, to be frustrated. The picture might not find its way to remote

places; the opportunity of acquiring it might be neglected, or it might remain in the possession of its unthinking owner, a forgotten thing. The Romish Church, in its infinite benevolence, considered this; and therefore sold indulgences, making the act of purchasing them, and thus contributing to its wants, a merit of itself sufficient to deserve so inestimable a reward. It was taught also, that merits were transferable by gift or purchase: under this persuasion, large endowments were bestowed upon convents, on condition that the donor should partake in the merits of the community; and few persons who had any property at their own disposal, went out of the world without bequeathing some of it to the clergy, for saying masses, in number proportioned to the amount of the bequest, for the benefit of their souls. The wealthy founded chantries, in which service was to be performed, for ever, to this end. Thus were men taught to put their trust in riches: their wealth being thus invested, became available to them beyond the grave; and in whatever sins they indulged, provided they went through the proper forms, and obtained a discharge, they might purchase a free passage through Purgatory, or at least, an abbreviation of the term, and a mitigation of its torments while they lasted. How severe these torments were to be, might in some degree be estimated by the scale appointed for those who were willing to commute, at a certain rate, while they were alive. The set-off for a single year was fixed at the recitation of thirty psalms, with an accompaniment of one hundred stripes to each: the whole psalter, with its accompaniment of fifteen thousand, availing only to redeem five years. The chronicles of the middle ages are filled with horrible legends, invented to promote a superstition so profitable to the priests: and that it might be the more deeply impressed upon the people, the representations of souls weltering in fire were exposed in churches, and in streets, and by the way-side; fraternities were established to beg for them; and to give money for their use is part of the penance which is usually, at this day, appointed by the confessor.

But Purgatory was not the only invisible world over which the authority of the Church extended; for to the Pope, as to the representative of St Peter, it was pretended that the keys of heaven and hell were given; a portion of this power was delegated to every priest, and they inculcated, that the soul which departed without confession and absolution, bore with it the weight of its deadly sins to sink it to perdition. This also was a practice of priestcraft, ingrafted upon a wholesome discipline,

which had grown out of a just religious feeling. The primitive Christians, when their conscience smote them for the neglect of duty, or the commission of sin, used to take shame to themselves, by acknowledging the fault before God and man, in the face of the congregation. While they were a small community, each known to the others, this was no inconvenience: but when numbers increased, and zeal abated, the confession* was then made privately to the priest alone; and the clergy so clearly perceived the influence which they derived from this, that they soon insisted upon it as a peremptory duty, imperative upon all persons; and according to the usual craft, they propagated a thousand tales of ghosts who had visited earth to reveal their horrible doom for having left it unperformed. Of all the practices of the Romish Church, this is the one which has proved most injurious; and if it be regarded in connexion with the celibacy of the clergy, the cause will be apparent why the state of morals is generally so much more corrupt in Catholic than in Protestant countries. This obvious and enormous mischief is not its only evil consequence. The uses of conscience were at an end when it was delivered into the keeping of a confessor. Actions, then, instead of being tried by the eternal standard of right and wrong, on which the unsophisticated heart unerringly pronounces, were judged by the rules of a pernicious casuistry, the intent of which was to make men satisfied with themselves upon the cheapest terms. The inevitable effect was, that the fear of human laws became the only restraint upon evil propensities, when men were taught to believe that the account with Divine Justice might easily be settled. Tables were actually set forth by authority, in which the rate of absolution for any imaginable crime was fixed, and the most atrocious might be committed with spiritual impunity for a few shillings. The foulest murderer and parricide, if he escaped the hangman, might, at this price, set his conscience at ease concerning all farther consequences!

If the boundless credulity of mankind be a mournful subject for consideration, as in truth it is, it is yet more mournful to observe the profligate wickedness with which that credulity has been abused. The Church of Rome appears to have delighted in insulting as well as in abusing it, and to have pleased itself with discovering how far it was possible to subdue and degrade the human intellect, as an Eastern despot measures his own greatness by the servile prostration of his subjects. If farther

* Sozomen, 1. 7. c. 16.

proof than has already appeared were needful, it would be found in the prodigious doctrine of Transubstantiation. This astonishing doctrine arose from taking figurative words in a literal sense; and the Romanists do not shrink from the direct inference, that if their interpretation be just, Christ took his own body in his own hands, and offered it to his disciples. But all minor difficulties may easily be overlooked, when the flagrant absurdity of the doctrine itself is regarded. For, according to the Church of Rome, when the words of consecration have been pronounced, the bread becomes that same actual body of flesh and blood in which our Lord and Saviour suffered upon the cross; remaining bread to the sight, touch, and taste, yet ceasing to be so, . . . and into how many parts soever the bread may be broken, the whole entire body is contained in every part. And this, they pretend, is that daily bread for which our Saviour has instructed us to pray.

Of all the corruptions of Christianity, there was none which the Popes so long hesitated to sanction as this. When the question was brought before Hildebrand, he not only inclined to the opinion of Berenger, by whom it was opposed, but appointed one of his clergy to consult the * Virgin Mary, and then declared that she had pronounced against it. Nevertheless, it prevailed, and was finally declared, by Innocent III., at the fourth Lateran Council, to be a tenet necessary to salvation. Strange as it may appear, the doctrine had become popular, . . . with the people, for its very extravagance, . . . with the clergy, because they grounded upon it their loftiest pretensions. For if there were in the sacrament this actual and entire sole presence, which they denoted by the term of Transubstantiation, it followed that divine worship was something more than a service of prayer and thanksgiving; an actual sacrifice was performed in it, wherein they affirmed the Saviour was again offered up, in the same body which had suffered on the cross, by their hands. The priest, when he performed this stupendous function of his ministry, had before his eyes, and held † in his hands, the Maker of Heaven and Earth; and the inference which they deduced from so blasphemous an assumption was, that the clergy were not to be subject to any secular authority, seeing that they could create ‡ God their Creator! Let it not be supposed that the statement is

* Mosheim, vol. ii. p. 335, note z. the missal. Quoted in Hicke's *Trun*
(English translation, 2d edition, 1768). *Notion of Persecution* stated, p. 22.
Martene and Durand. *Thes. Anec. t.* ‡ Eadmer. *Acta Sanctorum* Apr. t.
iv. 108. ii. p. 919. *Stella Clericorum*, quoted
by Jeremy Taylor, vol. ix. p. 408.

† Urban VIII. In his preface before

in the slightest part exaggerated, it is delivered faithfully in their own words.

If such, then, were the power of the clergy, even of the meanest priest, what must be attributed to their earthly head, the successor of St Peter? They claimed for him a plenitude of power; and it has been seen that he exercised it over the princes of Christendom in its fullest meaning. According to the Canonists, the Pope was as far above all kings, as the sun is greater than the moon. He was King of kings, and Lord of lords, though he subscribed himself the Servant of servants. His power it was which was intended,* when it was said to the Prophet Jeremiah, "Behold, I have this day set thee over the nations and the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." It was an incomprehensible and infinite power, because † "great is the Lord, and great is his power, and of his greatness there is no end." The immediate and sole rule of the whole world belonged to him by natural, moral, and divine right; all authority depending upon him. As supreme King, he might ‡ impose taxes upon all Christians; and the Popes declared it was to be held as a point necessary § to salvation, that every human creature is subject to the Roman Pontiff. That he might lawfully depose kings, was averred to be so certain a doctrine, that it could only be denied by madmen, or through the instigation of the devil; it was more pernicious and intolerable to deny it, than to err concerning the sacraments. And, indeed, God would not have sufficiently provided for the preservation of his Church, and the safety of souls, if He had not appointed this power of depriving or || restraining apostate princes. All nations and kingdoms were under the Pope's jurisdiction, for to him God ¶ had delivered over the power and dominion in heaven and earth. Nay, he might take away kingdoms and empires, with or without cause, and give them to whom he pleased, though the sovereign whom he should depose were in every respect not merely blameless, but meritorious: it was reason enough for the change that the Pope ** deemed it convenient. The Spouse of the Church was Vice-God: men were commanded to bow †† at his name, as at the name of Christ; the proudest sovereigns waited upon him like

* Barrow, vol. vi. p. 11. P. Innocent III. quoted. Foulis, p. 30.

† Barrow, vol. vi. p. 5. Oxford edit. Aug. Triumph. de Potest. Eccl. in præf. ad P. Joh. xxii. quoted.

‡ Barrow, vol. vi. p. 5.

§ Ibid. pp. 9, 184.

|| Cardinal Allen, quoted by Foulis, p. 62.

¶ Barrow, vol. vi. p. 6.

** Bozious, quoted by Foulis, p. 98.

†† Foulis, p. 34. *Paris Crassus. de ceremoniis Cardinalium, etc. Epist. l. i. c. 22, quoted.*

menials, led his horse by the bridle, and held his stirrup while he alighted; and there were ambassadors who prostrated themselves before him, saying,* “O thou, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us!”

The advocates of the Papal power proclaimed, that any secular laws which might be passed against a decree of the Roman Pontiff, were in themselves null and void; and that all pontifical decrees ought for ever to be observed by all men, like the word of God, to be received as if they came from the mouth† of St Peter himself, and held like canonical‡ Scripture. Neither the Catholic faith, nor the four Evangelists, could avail those who rejected them, this being a sin which was never to be remitted. Christ had bestowed upon the Pope, when he spake as such, the same§ infallibility which resided in himself. And were he utterly to neglect his duty, and by his misconduct drag down innumerable souls to hell with him, there to be eternally tormented, no mortal man might|| presume to reprove him for his faults. Even this monstrous¶ proposition has been advanced, and although the Catholic Faith teaches all virtue to be good, and all vice evil; nevertheless, if the Pope, through error, should enjoin vices to be committed, and prohibit virtues, the Church would be bound to believe that vices were good, and virtues evil, and would sin in conscience were it to believe otherwise. He could change the nature of things, and make injustice justice. Nor was it possible that he should be amenable to any secular power, for he had been called God by Constantine, and God** was not to be judged by man: under God, the salvation of all the faithful†† depended on him, and the commentators even gave him the blasphemous appellation of our ‡‡ Lord God the Pope! It was disputed in the schools, whether he could not abrogate what the Apostles had enjoined, determine an opinion contrary to theirs, and add a new article to the creed; whether he did not, as God, participate both natures with Christ; and

* Paulus Æmilius, p. 384. (Basilie, 1569). Paradin Cronique de Savoye, p. 192. Lyon, 1552.

† Decreta, Par. i. Dis. 19. ff. 18.

‡ Ibid. ff. 19.

§ Theses of the Jesuits at Clermont, quoted by Foulis in the Preface to his History of Popish Treasons and Usurpations.

|| Decreta, P. i. Dist. 40. ff. 44. This was maintained by the Patriarch of Antioch at the Council of Constance. L'Enfant, vol. i. 201, 2.

¶ South's Sermons (Oxford edition), vol. ii. p. 115. Bellarmine, *De Pontifico*

Romano, quoted. Foulis, 31. Barrow, vol. vi. 230.

** Decreta, Par. i. Dis. 96. ff. 107. Paris, 1518.

†† Decreta, Par. i. Dis. 40. ff. 44.

‡‡ Foulis, Hist. of Popish Treasons, etc. p. 29. Extra, Joh. xxii. Tit. 14. de verborum significat. cap. iv. *cum inter nonnullos. Gloss. sect. Declaramus, prope finem*. The reader who refers to Foulis, will see why he has been thus minute in his quotation. The passage is found in ten editions of the Canons, which he had examined, four of them published after Gregory XIII. had corrected the Canon Law.

whether he were not more merciful than Christ, inasmuch as he delivered souls from the pains of purgatory, whereas we did not read that this had ever been done by our Saviour. Lastly, it was affirmed, that he might do things* unlawful, and thus could do more than God!

All this was certain, because the Church was infallible. Where this infallibility resided, the Romanists have differed among themselves, some vesting it in the Pope, others requiring the concurrence of a General Council. Infallible, however, it was determined that the Roman Catholic Church must be, and thus the key-stone was put to this prodigious structure of imposture and wickedness.

CHAPTER XI.

RISE OF THE REFORMATION—THE MENDICANT ORDERS—WICLIFFE
—PERSECUTION UNDER THE HOUSE OF LANCASTER.

THE corrupt lives of the clergy provoked inquiry into their doctrines. Reformers arose, who found followers in the Alpine and Pyrenean countries, where the truth of better ages had been preserved; and the scattered but numerous relics of various heretical sects, which, though subdued, still secretly existed, fraternised with them. Agreeing in their detestation of Romish tyranny, they disregarded lesser differences; and their assimilated opinions assumed a systematic form, wherein the general principles of the Reformation are distinctly to be traced, and the germs also of those schisms, which so lamentably impeded and disgraced its progress. They taught that the Pope was the head of all errors: that the Romish Church is that Woman who is described in the Apocalypse, as sitting on the Beast, arrayed in purple and scarlet, decked with gold and precious stones, having the golden cup of her filthiness in her hand, and upon her forehead written, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." The book itself explained, that the seven heads of her beast, were the seven mountains upon which her seat was placed, a designation manifestly betokening Rome. They declared against all the abuses of the Church, and condemned most of its ceremonies, compre-

* Barrow, vol. vi. p. 5.

hending what was innocent and useful in the same proscription with what was superstitious and injurious. Because the monks deceived the people, they proclaimed that Monkeny was a stinking carrion, and monasteries an evil. Because the churches were profusely adorned, they would have stripped them bare. Because the doctrine of merits was preposterous, they maintained the not less preposterous tenet, that the best works of man are sinful in themselves. And because the clergy arrogated a monstrous power, they were for a levelling system, which in its direct and certain consequences, extended from religious to political opinions.

Indignation against spiritual tyranny and imposture, uncompromising sincerity, and intrepid zeal, made them formidable to the hierarchy. Their numbers rapidly increased, for both the truth and the errors which they taught, rendered them popular, while they commanded respect by the purity and even austerity of their lives. The Papal Church was seriously endangered, and a religious revolution might perhaps have been effected, which would have produced more evil than good, because Europe was not ripe for it, if a counter and stronger spirit of enthusiasm had not been called forth in its defence. The person by whom this signal service was rendered to the Papacy, was the son of a rich merchant at Assissi : he was called by his acquaintance Francesco, because of his familiar knowledge of the French tongue, which was at that time a rare accomplishment for an Italian ; and Hercules is not better known in classical fable, than he became in Romish mythology, by the name of St Francis. In his youth, it is certain, that he was actuated by delirious piety ; but the web of his history is interwoven with such inextricable falsehoods, that it is not possible to decide whether, in riper years, he became madman or impostor ; nor whether at last he was the accomplice of his associates, or the victim. Having infected a few kindred spirits with his first enthusiasm, he obtained the Pope's consent to institute an order of Friars Minorite ; so, in his humility, he called them ; they are better known by the name of Franciscans, after their founder, in honour of whom they have likewise given themselves the modest appellation of the Seraphic Order,—having in their blasphemous fables installed him above the Seraphim, upon the throne from which Lucifer fell !

Previous attempts had been made to enlist, in the service of the Papal Church, some of those fervent spirits, whose united hostility all its strength would have been insufficient to with-

stand ; but these had been attended with little effect, and projects of this kind were discouraged, as rather injurious than hopeful, till Francis presented himself. His entire devotion to the Pope, . . . his ardent adoration of the Virgin Mary, as the great Goddess of the Romish faith, . . . the strangeness, and perhaps the very extravagance, of the institute which he proposed, obtained a favourable acceptance for his proposals. Reclusion for the purpose of religious meditation, was the object of the earlier religious orders ; his followers were to go into the streets and highways to exhort the people. The monks were justly reproached for luxury, and had become invidious for their wealth ; the friars were bound to the severest rule of life ; they went barefoot, and renounced, not only for themselves individually, but collectively also, all possessions whatever, trusting to daily charity for their daily bread. It was objected to him that no community, established upon such a principle, could subsist without a miracle : he referred to the lilies in the text, for scriptural authority ; to the birds, for an example ; and the marvellous increase of the order was soon admitted as full proof of the inspiration of its founder. In less than ten years, the delegates alone to its General Chapter exceeded five thousand in number ; and by an enumeration in the early part of the eighteenth century, when the Reformation must have diminished their amount at least one-third, it was found that even then there were 28,000 Franciscan nuns in 900 nunneries, and 115,000 Franciscan friars in 7000 convents ; besides very many nunneries, which, being under the immediate jurisdiction of the Ordinary, and not of the order, were not included in the returns.

The rival order of St Dominic was instituted nearly at the same time, for the same purpose, and upon the same principle. The temper of its founder engaged it in the bloody service of extirpating the Albigenses by fire and sword : . . . in this work both orders co-operated, and though they soon began cordially to hate each other, they were both equally zealous in serving the Papal Church, and in persecuting its enemies. The tide of popular opinion was effectually turned by their exertions ; but in process of time they became the opprobrium and scandal of the Church which they had preserved : the opportunities which their manner of life afforded, made their vices notorious ; and the falsehoods which they fabricated in rivalry of each other, were in a spirit of blasphemous impiety, beyond all former example, as it is almost beyond belief. The wildest romance contains nothing more extravagant than the legends of St Dominic : and even

these were outdone by the more atrocious effrontery of the Franciscans. They held up their founder, even during his life, as the perfect pattern of our Lord and Saviour; and, to authenticate the parallel, they exhibited him with a wound in his side, and four nails in his hands and feet, fixed there, they affirmed, by Christ himself, who had visibly appeared for the purpose of thus rendering the conformity between them complete! Two miserable wretches, only two years before, had attempted the same dreadful fraud in England, and having been detected in it, were punished by actual crucifixion! But in the case of St Francis, it succeeded to the fullest extent of expectation. Whether he consented to the villany, or was in such a state of moral and physical imbecility, as to have been the dupe or the victim of those about him; and whether it was committed with the connivance of the Papal Court, or only in certain knowledge that that Court would sanction it when done, though it might not deem it prudent to be consenting before the fact, . . . are questions which it is now impossible to resolve. Sanctioned, however, the horrible imposture was by that Church which calls itself infallible: a day for its perpetual commemoration was appointed in the Romish Kalendar; and a large volume was composed, entitled the Book of the Conformities between the lives of the blessed and seraphic Father Francis and our Lord!

Jealous of these conformities, the Dominicans followed their rivals in the path of blasphemy, . . . but with unequal steps. They declared that the five wounds had been impressed also upon St Dominic; but that, in his consummate humility, he had prayed and obtained that this signal mark of Divine grace might never be made public while he lived. They affirmed that the Virgin Mary had adopted him for her son, and that his countenance perfectly resembled the authentic description and miraculous portrait of our Saviour. The envious enmity between these orders displayed itself in these competitions of falsehood, and in theological or scholastic controversy, upon those points whereon it was allowable to dispute: on such questions the Dominicans and Franciscans were always opposed to each other; but they held a common cause against the Reformers, and against the secular clergy, whose rights and privileges they invaded in many ways, in some respects to the benefit of the Church, in others to its injury. As itinerant preachers they called forth devotional feelings, which would otherwise never have been excited, and performed some of that duty which the parochial clergy in those ages very generally neglected; as iti-

nerant confessors, they lessened the influence of the resident priest, and the little good which may arise from the demoralising practice of confession; and as licensed and incorporated beggars, they preyed at large upon the public. Being exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, that salutary restraint was wanting of which such preachers stood in need. But what most offended the secular clergy, because it most injured them, was that, as the earlier Regulars had done before them, the Mendicants obtained from their opulent patrons the advowsons of livings, which they served by some of their own members, or allowing a secular priest a small portion of the income, appropriated the larger part to the uses of the convent in which the patronage was vested. For it was soon found convenient to dispense with that part of their institution which forbade them to possess anything as a community.

The influence which these orders obtained was, for a time, prodigious; it was produced partly by the pure enthusiasm of the virtuous members, . . . partly by the reputation of others; (for they could boast some of the subtlest and profoundest intellects that the world has ever seen); . . . and partly by the implicit belief with which their enormous fables were received. Elated by success, and, as it seems, secretly conscious how little the system which they taught resembled the religion of the Apostles, they conceived a plan for superseding the Gospel; and this was so congenial to the temper of both orders, that it is doubtful whether it proceeded from a Dominican or Franciscan. The opinion which they started was, that as there were three Persons in one Godhead, the scheme of Providence was, that there should be three dispensations, one from each Person. That of the Father had terminated when the Law was abolished by the Gospel; that of the Son was now drawing, in like manner, to its close, and was to be superseded by that of the Holy Spirit. The uses of the Gospel therefore were obsolete; and in its place they produced a book, in the name of the Holy Ghost, under the title of the Eternal Gospel. The first dispensation had been for married persons: this had prepared the way for the Clergy in the second; the Regulars, being as much purer than the Clergy, as these were than the Jews and Patriarchs, were, under the third, to become rulers of the Church, with greater authority than had ever been granted to the Apostles. Under the first, men had lived after the flesh; under the second, in a mixed state between the flesh and the spirit; in the third, they would live wholly according to the spirit, and the scheme of Providence

would be fulfilled. In this, however, they went too far: the minds of men were not yet subdued to this. The Eternal Gospel was condemned by the Church; and the Mendicants were fain to content themselves with disfiguring the religion which they were not allowed to set aside.

The Church of Rome cleared itself of this infamy; but the reproach remained of having sanctioned the impostures which emboldened the friars to so blasphemous an attempt; and circumstances arose which converted some of these auxiliaries into dangerous enemies. When the successors of Francis relaxed the rigour of his rule, they were opposed by brethren more sincere, but less reasonable, than themselves. These pure enthusiasts maintained, that the utter renunciation of all possessions was enjoined by Christ himself, whose Gospel their patriarch had renewed; and when the Pope condemned this opinion as an heresy, they denied his authority, and attacked him as vehemently as the Waldenses and Albigenses had done, who by their means had been crushed. Irritated at this, the Pope let loose the Dominicans against them; and that order, for ever infamous as having founded the Inquisition, had the satisfaction of persecuting these Spiritual Franciscans, and seeing many hundreds of them expire in the flames, with constancy worthy of a better cause. A schism in the Papal Church, and a fortunate dispute between the popes and emperors, enabled others to find an asylum in Germany, where in safety they continued their attacks upon the Papacy; and by exposing its rapacity, its inconsistency, and its crimes, prepared the way for the great reformation which was at hand.

The first discontent in England was provoked by the manner in which the popes abused their victory in that country. They had acted with consummate policy during the struggle; but rapacity is short-sighted, and a people who gave full credit to all their frauds, and yielded implicit obedience to their pretensions, felt and resented the merciless extortions which were practised upon them by the Pope's agents, and by the foreigners upon whom the best benefices were bestowed. In the reign of Henry III., the Italians, who were beneficed here, drew from England more than thrice the amount of the King's revenues, fleecing, by means of priests, who were aliens also, the flock which they never fed. Repeated statutes were made against this evil. A set of Lombards, too, established themselves here, in connexion with the Legates, to advance money upon all sums due to the Pope, for which they exacted the most exorbitant usury, though

all usury was prohibited as a sin by the Canon Law. The Government also began to apprehend serious injury from the multiplication of religious houses; apprehensions were expressed that men would be wanting for the service of husbandry and for war, if so many were collected in convents; and a real diminution in the revenue was felt in the failure of knight-service, and of the rights accruing to the crown upon marriages, deaths, and wardships; . . . accidents to which Church lands were not liable. The statute of mortmain was passed to prevent farther foundations; and from the various devices for evading it, the greater number of our fictions in law have arisen.

This law appears to have given what had now become a more useful direction to the spirit of munificent bounty which prevailed during those ages; dark ages we call them, and dark they were, . . . but in this splendid virtue they have never been surpassed, and all subsequent times are shamed by comparison with them. It was now that the Universities received their chief endowments; their utility was clearly perceived, and persons who were desirous of contributing to their improvement or advancement, easily obtained a dispensation from the statute, for so good an object. The friars, who, by their assiduity and boldness, forced themselves everywhere, interfered here as much with the rights of the universities as they had done with those of the secular clergy. Their desire was, to recruit their numbers with the most hopeful subjects; and as the most promising youth were brought together to these schools of learning, there were no places where they collected so many novices. The boys whom they inveigled were taught to disregard filial duty; . . . the more averse indeed their parents were to their taking the vows, the greater the merit was represented of the children who made the sacrifice. This was carried to such an extent, that parents became afraid to trust their sons at Oxford; and the number of students is said to have been diminished, in consequence, from thirty to six thousand.* The friars therefore were regarded with an evil eye by the members of that University, from the duties of which they endeavoured to exempt themselves, as they had obtained an exemption from its jurisdiction. And when there appeared a man bold enough to attack them upon the principle of their institution and the errors which they taught, and skilful enough in disputation to baffle them at their own weapons, he was encouraged by the persons in authority there.

* Lewis's *Life of Wicliffe*, p. 5.

This man was John Wicliffe, whom the Roman Church has stigmatised as a heretic of the first class, but whom England and the Protestant world, while there is any virtue and while there is any praise, will regard with veneration and gratitude. He is supposed to have been born at a village of the same name, in the North Riding, upon the Tees (near the place where that river, in the most beautiful part of its course, receives the Yorkshire Greta): and having been a Commoner at Queen's College, at that time newly founded, and then a Probationer at Merton, was appointed* Master of Balliol. At first he exercised himself in disputing against the friars upon scholastic subtleties and questions which, ending in nothing, as they begin, exercise the intellect without enriching it. But such being the manner of controversy then in use, this was a necessary preparation for him; and the reputation, which thus only could be obtained, was available to a better purpose, when, feeling his own strength, and that the opinion of the place was with him, he charged them with maintaining false doctrine. For they taught, that the religion which they inculcated was more perfect than that of the Gospels: that Christ had not only enjoined a life of mendicity, but set the example of it, by begging for his own livelihood; and that the members of their order were sure of obtaining salvation, and would sit in judgment with our Lord upon all other men at the last day.

While he confined himself to such questions, success was certain, and he stood upon safe ground. But even then, his opponents saw good reason for suspecting his opinions upon points which he had not yet ventured to attack; and the monks, hostile as their feelings were toward the friars, made common cause with them against Wicliffe. Canterbury Hall had been founded by the Primate Simon de Islip, who appointed a monk of his own church Warden; but, finding him an unfit person, on account of his hasty temper, ejected him, and placed Wicliffe in his stead. Upon Islip's death, his successor, Simon Langham, took part with the monks, and ejected Wicliffe. Wicliffe appealed to Rome. That Court was prepossessed against him, and yet might perhaps have pursued the policy of winning him by favourable treatment, if a circumstance had not occurred while the cause was pending, which led him to take a decided part. Edward III. had refused that homage to which King John had subjected his successors, and Urban V. threatened, that, if it were

* L'Enfant (Hist. du Con. de Pise. t. i. p. 38) says, that Wicliffe was confessor to Richard II. He has not stated on what authority this is asserted.

not performed, he would cite him to Rome, there to answer for the default. A sovereign of Edward's ability and renown was not thus to be intimidated; the feeling of the country was with him, and the Parliament affirming that what John had done in this matter was a violation of his coronation oath, declared that if the Pope proceeded in any way against the King, he and all his subjects should with all their power resist him. The Papal claims were defended by a monk, in a treatise, published as books were before the discovery of printing, by the dispersion of numerous transcripts, and written with such ability that it produced considerable impression upon those into whose hands it came. But he ventured to challenge * Wicliffe upon the question, who, coming forward with superior ability in a better cause, produced a conclusive reply; in reward for which, when the appeal concerning the Wardenship was decided against him, he was appointed Professor of Divinity. And as a farther mark of favour, the living of Lutterworth in Leicestershire was given him.

Hitherto his opposition to the Papal authority had been purely constitutional, and if he had yet satisfied himself concerning the corruption of the Romish doctrines, that judgment was rather implied than expressed in his discourses from the pulpit and his exercises in the schools. Implied it was by his silence upon some of those doctrines, and his constant reference to Scripture, in which he was so well versed, that when contemporary teachers were designated each by some epithet characteristic of their scholastic talents, the Gospel † Doctor was the appellation by which he was known. But certainly it could not have been avowed when, two years after his appointment to the Divinity chair, he was named, with other ambassadors, to meet the Pope's representatives at Bruges, and resist his pretensions to the presentation of benefices in England; an injurious practice, against which several statutes had been passed. The negotiation lasted nearly two years: and it is probable that what he then had opportunities of discovering, convinced him that the system of the Papal Court and its doctrines were equally corrupt. For, on his return, he attacked it in the boldest manner, maintained that the Scriptures contained all truths necessary to salvation, and that the perfect rule of Christian practice was to be found in them only; denied the authority of the Pope in temporal matters; proclaimed that he was that Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, whom St Paul prophetically describes, "sitting as God

* Lewis's Wicliffe, p. 19.

† Ibid. p. 2.

in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God," and denounced him as Antichrist. These opinions he openly preached and published, appealing to the Scriptures for their proof; and they were propagated by his disciples, who attacked the friars in their own manner, preaching to the people, and going about, as he himself did, barefoot, and in plain frieze gowns. It was not long before he was accused of heresy, and orders came to Sudbury the Primate, and Courtney the Bishop of London, to have him arrested, and kept in close custody till they should receive further instructions. But the Duke of Lancaster, John of Gaunt, who was then governing the kingdom during the latter days of his father, protected him with a high hand; and he was still so popular in Oxford, that when a Nuncio was sent thither, requiring the University, under pain of the severest penalties, to deliver him up for justice, the threats were disregarded. The Archbishop, finding it impossible to proceed in the summary manner which the Pope ordered, summoned him to appear within thirty days before him and the Bishop of London, at a Synod held in St Paul's; and Wicliffe, confident in his cause and in his protectors, hesitated not to obey. During the interval between the citation and appearance, a circumstance occurred which contributed alike to incense the prelates against him, and to strengthen his interest with the Government. Richard II. had just succeeded to his grandfather's throne, and in his first Parliament the question was debated, whether, the kingdom being then threatened with an invasion from France, they might not for their own defence detain the treasure due to the Pope, although he required it on pain of ecclesiastical censures? Opinions differing upon this question, it was referred to Wicliffe for decision; . . . less, it may be presumed, for his celebrity as a casuist, than because the ruling party knew in what manner he would decide. His answer was, that both by the law of the nation and of the Gospel, it might be withheld when self-preservation required it. The Pope could only claim it as alms; but charity begins at home; and it would be madness, not charity, to send that money out of the realm, which was wanted for its defence.

On the day appointed, Wicliffe appeared before the Synod, with four bachelors of divinity, one from each of the Mendicant Orders, to assist him, . . . thus shewing, that even among the friars themselves, he had found disciples and coadjutors; and with John of Gaunt, and Lord Percy the Earl Marshal, as his friends and protectors. With whatever intent these powerful barons accompanied him, their conduct was such as dis-

credited the cause. Before the proceedings could begin, they engaged in an angry altercation with Bishop Courtney, who appears to have preserved both his temper and his dignity, when Lancaster had lost all sense of both. Here, however, the feeling of the people was against Wicliffe, probably because he was supported by an unpopular Government; and when the citizens who were present heard Lancaster mutter a threat of dragging their Bishop out of the church by the hair of his head, they took fire; a tumult ensued; the Synod was broken up, and the barons were glad to effect their escape as they could. In consequence of this disturbance, an imprudent bill was brought forward the same day in Parliament, by Lord Percy, that London should be governed by a Captain, as in former times, instead of a Mayor, and that the sole power of making arrests within the city should be vested in the Earl Marshal. The member for the city, John Philpot, manfully opposed this attempt upon the liberties of London: a riot ensued the next day; Lancaster and the Earl Marshal escaped up the river to Kingston; and the mob, to shew their detestation of the Duke, hung his escutcheon upon gibbets in the open places of the city, as if he had been a convicted traitor. By the interference of the Court, and of the bishops, who, notwithstanding the occasion of these troubles, supported the cause of Government as that of order, with the whole strength of their authority, the Duke and the city were reconciled; one of the conditions being, that, in atonement, probably, for the death of a priest in his service, whom they had murdered in their fury, the citizens should maintain a great wax taper marked with the Duke's arms, to burn continually before the image of our Lady in St Paul's.

These tumults having been appeased, Wicliffe was cited to appear before the same prelates, at Lambeth. He obeyed; and delivered in a written explanation of the points upon which the charges of heresy against him were founded. The strength of his defence would have availed him little, if Sir Lewis Clifford had not suddenly entered with authoritative orders, forbidding them to proceed to sentence. It is not, however, likely that any protection could long have upheld him against the ecclesiastical authority, if a schism had not at this juncture occurred to weaken the Papal power, and shake its very foundations. Wicliffe seized the advantage which was thus offered him, and set forth a tract upon the schism, exposing the absurdity of ascribing Infallibility to a divided Church. He published, also, a treatise upon the Truth of Scripture; and that his countrymen might be

enabled to try his doctrines by that test, he translated both the Old and New Testament into the English tongue. There were several partial versions in the Anglo-Saxon language, but these had long become obsolete; and the portions of Scripture,* which had previously been rendered into English, were in few hands.

It is related of him, that before he had completed this most important undertaking, he fell dangerously ill at Oxford, and some of the friars, hoping that the prospect of death might bring with it fear of ecclesiastical censures, waited upon him to require that he would revoke what he had taught against the Mendicant Orders. Having listened to them patiently, he desired his attendant to raise him on his pillow, and then looking at them sternly, replied, "I shall not die, but live still further to declare the evil deeds of the friars!" When he attacked them, he had the secular clergy and the better class of Regulars in his favour; and when he opposed the Papal authority, he acted in unison with the wishes of the Government and the spirit of the country. But he now proceeded to impugn the doctrine of Transubstantiation, shewing what absurdities and contradictions it involved, . . . and then all favour failed him: for the people implicitly believed this doctrine, the clergy rested their loftiest pretensions upon it, and the Government had no inclination to interfere in points of mere theology. When Wicliffe published his "Conclusions" upon this subject, and offered to defend them in the schools, the University forbade any of its members to hold or defend such doctrines, on pain of imprisonment. He appealed, consistently with his principles, to the King in Parliament; but his appeal was rejected. His patron, Lancaster, admonished him to submit, in these matters, to his ecclesiastical superiors: and he was summoned before an ecclesiastical court at Oxford, to explain his doctrine. A retraction was expected. On this occasion his consummate skill in the language of the schools, appears to have saved him both from the consequences of avowing his opinions and the dishonour of denying them.

* I cannot but consider Sir Thomas More's authority as decisive upon this subject: his words are,—“Myself have sene and can shew you Bybles fayre and old, wryten in Englyshe, whych have ben knowen and sene by the Byshop of the dyocyse, and left in ley mennys handys and womens, to suche as he knew for good and catholyke folke, that used it with devocyon and sobernesse.” (*Dialoge*, book iii. c. xv.) He had previously

said, that these translations “were allredy well done of olde, before Wyelyffys days.” Lewis has endeavoured to disprove this;—but I do not think any reasoning can possibly outweigh the positive affirmation of such a man as Sir Thomas More, upon a matter of fact, on which he could not be mistaken. His words may imply that there existed a complete translation; but are not necessarily to be taken in that extent.

The doctrine which he held, is that which the Church of England afterwards adopted: and by declaring his full belief of the real presence in the sacrament, while he kept clear of all attempt at explaining the inscrutable manner of that presence, he so far satisfied the court, that he was dismissed without censure; and yet so fairly preserved his consistency, that his confession was declared by his enemies to be, not a recantation of his heresy, but a vindication of it.

But even upon the point of transubstantiation his opinions gained ground; for his translation of the Bible was now eagerly read by all who could obtain it, and it was perceived that his doctrine bore the test. His proselytes became very numerous; and obtained the name of Lollards, which had been given, in the Low Countries, to the persecuted Franciscans and other enthusiasts, from their practice of singing hymns, . . . *lollen* or *lullen*, in one of the old German dialects, signifying to sing, as a mother when she lulls her babe. Upon the death of Sudbury, who was murdered by the rabble in Wat Tyler's insurrection, Courtney succeeded to the primacy; he was a man of ability and decision, and lost no time in citing Wicliffe before him. Wicliffe refused to appear, pleading that, by his office in the University, he was exempted from episcopal jurisdiction. Articles, however, were preferred against him, as drawn from his writings, some being fair statements of the opinions which he taught, and others gross and malicious distortions of his meaning. Just as the assembly began their deliberations, the monastery in which they met was shaken by an earthquake; they interpreted it as a mark of Divine displeasure, probably because many who were there to sit in judgment upon Wicliffe, were secretly conscious that his cause was good, . . . and in that fear they would have fain broken up the meeting, if Courtney had not, with great presence of mind, given the earthquake a different interpretation; . . . if it portended anything, he said, it was the purging of the kingdom from heresies; for as the air and noxious spirits in the bowels of the earth were expelled by this convulsion, so was the kingdom, not without commotion, to be cleared of noxious opinions, which were in the hearts of reprobate men. The Synod therefore proceeded with their business; and the propositions, such as they appeared by the accuser's statement, when there was no one to explain or defend them, were censured, some as erroneous, and others condemned as heretical.

The sentence was published at Oxford; but its effect there was invalidated, by the spirit with which Wicliffe vindicated

himself, and exposed the malice or the ignorance with which his opinions had been misrepresented. Courtney then brought a Bill into Parliament, for imprisoning all persons who should preach heresies and notorious errors; and as soon as the Bill had passed the Lords, he acted upon it; upon which the House of Commons, which had now become an efficient part of the Constitution, petitioned that it should be annulled, as not having had their consent. Baffled by his own precipitance in this measure, Courtney obtained letters from the King to the Chancellor of Oxford, requiring him to banish Wicliffe from the university, and seize all writings in which his doctrines were maintained. The Chancellor represented that the peace of the University and his own life would be in danger were he to obey; . . . in fact, the partisans of the new doctrines were bold as well as numerous, and carried arms under their gowns, to make their cause good if they were offended. This temper, which fatally accompanied the Reformation, Wicliffe discouraged; and when Courtney insisted with the Chancellor upon obedience, he withdrew to his living of Lutterworth, where the Primate left him unmolested, for the fiery days of persecution had not yet commenced in England. Our great Reformer, undaunted in his retirement, and faithful to the last, still wielded the pen; and when Urban VI. endeavoured to raise men and money here for a crusade against the rival Pope, he wrote against the wickedness of exciting war in Christendom, upon a dispute between two false priests, insisting that the Pope was plainly Antichrist. Urban summoned him for this to Rome; he replied that an attack of palsy rendered him incapable of performing the journey. A second attack, which seized him in his church, proved fatal, when he was about sixty years of age. It is a reproach to this country that no statue has been erected in his honour, . . . and that his translation of the Old Testament should never have been printed.

Wicliffe held some erroneous opinions, some fantastic ones, and some which, in their moral and political consequences, are most dangerous. Considering the intrepidity and ardour of his mind, it is surprising that his errors were not more and greater. A * great and admirable man he was; his fame, high as it is, is not above his deserts; and it suffers no abatement upon comparison with the most illustrious of those who have followed in the path which he opened. His writings were carried into Bohemia by one of the natives of that country, whom the marriage of their prin-

* My authorities are Lewis's *Life of Wicliffe*; Baber's, prefixed to his *Translation of the New Testament*, and Fox.

cess with Richard II. brought into England. From the perusal of them, John Huss imbibed those opinions concerning the Papal Church, for which he suffered heroically at the stake, to his own eternal honour, and to the perpetual infamy of the Council which condemned him, and of the Emperor, who suffered the safe-conduct which he had given him to be broken; and Huss prepared the way for Luther.

This wife of Richard's, whose memory was so dear to the people, that long after her death she was called the good Queen Anne, protected the followers of Wicliffe while she lived, and was herself a diligent reader of the Scriptures in the English tongue; there can be little doubt, therefore, that it was in Wicliffe's translation. She was particularly commended for this by Archbishop Arundel, the successor of Courtney in the primacy, when he preached her funeral sermon. But the prelate, who thus commended her, is branded in history as a persecutor and a traitor: becoming a traitor, and taking an active part in deposing Richard, that he might no longer be withheld from persecuting a sect, whose numbers were now formidable. It was by the aid of the clergy that Henry IV. succeeded in usurping the throne, this being the only instance in English history wherein their conduct as a body was disloyal. To prove himself as sincere in their cause as they had been in his, and as little restrained by humanity or justice in supporting it, he passed a statute whereby all persons, who propagated the new doctrine by preaching, writing, teaching, or discourse, were required to renounce their heresies, and deliver in all their heretical books, and submit themselves to the Church, on pain of being delivered over to the secular arm, and burnt alive.

Undoubtedly the Lollards were highly dangerous at this time; if there were some among them whose views and wishes did not go beyond a just and salutary reformation, the greater number were eager for havoc, and held opinions which are incompatible with the peace of society. They would have stripped the churches, destroyed the monasteries, confiscated the Church lands, and proclaimed the principle that the saints should possess the earth. The public safety required that such opinions should be repressed; and founded as they were in gross error, and leading to direct and enormous evil, the Church would have deserved the approbation of impartial posterity, if it had proceeded temperately and justly in repressing them. But the course which the clergy pursued was equally impolitic and iniquitous; by making transubstantiation the test of heresy, and

insisting, on pain of the stake, upon the belief of a proposition which no man could believe unless he disregarded the evidence of his senses, they gave the Lollards all the advantage which men derive from the reputation and the merit of suffering in defence of the truth.

William Sautre, the parish priest of St Osithes, in London, and formerly of St Margaret's, at Lynn in Norfolk, was the first victim under the new statute, and the first martyr for the Reformation in England. He had been questioned for his opinions by the Bishop of Norwich, and, under the fear of death, had formally abjured them. "Let those," says the excellent Fuller, "who severely censure him for *once* denying the truth, and do know who it was that denied his Master *thrice*, take heed they do not as bad a deed more than four times themselves. May Sautre's final constancy be as surely practised by men, as his former cowardliness, no doubt, is pardoned by God." On his removal to London, he petitioned Parliament that he might be heard before them for the commodity of the whole realm; . . . an act to which he must have been induced less by the hope of effecting any public good, than by the desire of recovering his own peace of mind. In consequence of this, he was convented before Archbishop Arundel, in the Convocation, and charged with affirming that he would not worship the Cross on which Christ suffered, but only Christ who suffered on the Cross; . . . that if any man had vowed to make a distant pilgrimage, he would do better to disburse the expense of such a journey in alms, than to perform it; that it was more the duty of the clergy to preach the word of God, than to say the canonical hours; and finally, that the sacramental bread continued to be bread after it was consecrated. He desired time to answer the charges, and on the sixth day delivered in a scroll, explicitly declaring that these were the opinions which he held. Being then asked, if he had not formally abjured such opinions the preceding year? he is said to have denied it. The imperfect record of these proceedings has left this denial unexplained; it may have been that sort of denial, which a court of justice requires as preliminary to a trial; this however is certain, that it would not be less preposterous than unjust, did we impute falsehood to one who was about to give the last extreme proof of sincerity, and was actually at that time presenting himself for martyrdom. The single question with which he was pressed was, whether the sacrament of the altar, after the pronouncing of the sacramental words, remained material bread or not? It was not sufficient for him to

declare a firm belief that it was that bread of life which came down from Heaven ; he was required to acknowledge, that it ceased to be bread. "Thus," in the words of Fuller, "their cruelty made God's table a snare to his servants ; when their other nets broke, this held ; what they pretended a sacrifice for the living and the dead, proved indeed the cause of the sacrificing of many innocents ; and cavils about the corporal presence, was the most compendious way to despatch them." Finding it vain to protest that he attempted not to explain what is inexplicable, his final answer was, that the bread, after consecration, remained very bread as it was before. He was then pronounced to be judicially and lawfully convicted as a heretic, and as a heretic to be punished ; and being moreover a relapsed heretic, to be degraded, deposed, and delivered over to the secular arm.

This being the first condemnation of the kind in England, Arundel was punctual in all its forms, that they might serve for an exact precedent in future. They were probably derived from the practice of the accursed Inquisitors in Languedoc ; and they were well devised for prolonging an impression of horror upon the expectant and awed spectators. Sautre was brought before the Primate and six other Bishops in the cathedral of St Paul's ; they were in their pontifical attire, and he appeared in priestly vestments, with the paten and chalice in his hands. Arundel stood up, and, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (thus profaned in this inhuman process), degraded him, first from his priestly order, and in sign of that degradation, took from him the paten and chalice, and plucked the priestly casule from his back. The New Testament was then put into his hands, and taken from him ; the stole being at the same time pulled off, to degrade him from the office of deacon. By depriving him of the alb and maniple, his deprivation from the order of sub-deacon was effected. The candlestick, taper, and urceole were taken from him as acolyte ; the book of exorcisms as exorcist ; the lectionary as reader : he then remained in a surplice as sexton, and with the key of the church-door ; these also were taken from him : the priest's cap was then to be laid aside, the tonsure rased away, so that no outward mark whatever of his orders might remain ; the cap of a layman was placed upon his head, and Arundel then delivered him, as a secular person, to the secular court of the High-Constable and Marshal of England there present, beseeching the court to receive favourably the said William Sautre, unto them thus recommitted ; . . for with this hypocritical recommendation to mercy the Romish

Church always delivered over its victims to be burnt alive! Sautre accordingly suffered martyrdom at the stake; leaving a name which is still slandered by the Romanists, but which the Church of England will ever hold in deserved respect.

The second victim upon whom Arundel laid his hands, was a priest of great ability and firmness, William Thorpe by name. The same searching question was put to him, concerning the material bread in the Sacrament. "Sir," he replied, "I know no place in Holy Scripture where this term, material bread, is written, and therefore, when I speak of this matter, I use not to speak of material bread." How then did he teach men to believe in this Sacrament? "Sir," he replied, "as I believe myself, so I teach other men." And being required to tell out plainly his belief, he answered in these impressive words:—"Sir, I believe that the night before that Christ Jesu would suffer for mankind, he took bread in his holy and most worshipful hands, and lifting up his eyes, and giving thanks to God his Father, blessed the bread, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying to them, Take and eat of this, all you, this is my body. And that this is and ought to be all men's belief, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul witnesseth. Other belief, Sir, I have none, nor will have, nor teach; for I believe that this sufficeth in this matter. For in this belief, with God's grace, I purpose to live and die, acknowledging, as I believe and teach other men, that the worshipful Sacrament of the altar, is the Sacrament of Christ's flesh and his blood, in form of bread and wine." This, he said, had been accepted by the Church, for a thousand years, as sufficient for salvation, till the friar Thomas Aquinas introduced the term of an accident without subject,—“which term,” said he, “since I know not that God's law approveth it in this matter, I dare not grant; but utterly I deny to make this friar's sentence, or any such other, my belief. Do with me, God, what thou wilt!”

It is not related that Thorpe suffered; had he saved his life by recantation, it would not have been concealed; and, unless he had recanted, it is certain that no mercy would have been shewn; probably, therefore, he died in prison. The second victim who was brought to the stake, was a tailor, from the diocese of Gloucester, by name John Badby. Prince Henry (afterwards Henry V.) was present at his execution, and urged him to save his life by submitting to the opinion of the Church. The pix was then brought forth by the prior of St Bartholomew's, twelve tapers being carried before it: it was presented to Badby as he stood in an empty tub, chained to the stake, with faggots piled

around him, . . . and he was asked how he believed in it? He answered that it was hallowed bread, and not God's body; and upon that the pile was set on fire. His cry for mercy, whether it were addressed to God or man, touched the Prince with such compassion, that he ordered the fire to be quenched, and the sufferer to be taken down: and in that condition he offered him his life, if he would renounce his opinions, and a daily allowance from the treasury for his support. This poor man might well have gone through the world without troubling his conscience upon such subjects: but he had come to a point at which he rightly felt that insincerity was too dear a price to pay for life . . . and maintaining constantly his rejection of a tenet, which was now become as hateful as it was preposterous, he was replaced in the tub, and there, calling upon Christ to receive his soul, expired a martyr.

The statute upon which these inhuman executions were made, required that the heretics should be burnt "in an high place before the people, to the end that such punishment might strike in fear to the minds of others." To give farther efficacy to this bloody statute, Arundel set forth several provincial constitutions, whereby any persons preaching doctrines contrary to the determination of the Church, or calling in question what the Church had determined, were to be excommunicated *ipso facto* on the first offence, and declared heretics for the second. Whoever read the books of Wicliffe or his disciples, without a license from one of the universities, was to suffer as a promoter of heresy. The greater excommunication was to be incurred by advancing propositions, even in the schools, which tended to subvert the Catholic faith. It was declared heresy to dispute the utility of pilgrimages, or the adoration of images and of the cross. Because Oxford was greatly infected with Lollardy, the heads of every college were enjoined, on pain of excommunication and deprivation themselves, to inquire every month whether any scholars maintained doctrines against the determination of the Church; and if any such were found who remained obstinate, forthwith to expel them. The proceedings against offenders in this case, were to be as summary as in cases of treason. And because it was difficult to retain the true sense of Scripture in translations, whoever should translate it, or read such translations, particularly Wicliffe's, without the approbation of his ordinary, or of a provincial council, was to be punished as a promoter of heresy.

Twelve Inquisitors of heresy, . . . for this dreadful name had

been introduced among us ! were appointed at Oxford, to search out heretics and heretical books. They presented, as heresies, two hundred and forty-six conclusions, deduced, some truly and some falsely, from the writings of Wicliffe's followers and of the Lollards ; and they represented that Christ's vesture without seam could not be made whole again, unless certain great men, who supported the disciples of Wicliffe, were removed ; particularising Sir John Oldcastle, who in right of his wife, was Lord Cobham, a man of high birth, and at that time in favour with Henry V. Him they accused to the King of holding heretical opinions concerning the Sacrament, penance, pilgrimages, the adoration of images, and the authority of the Romish Church, declaring their intention of proceeding against him as a most pernicious heretic. Henry V. was of a noble, but immitigable nature. He knew and admired the noble qualities of Lord Cobham, and requested the prelates, that, if it were possible, they would reduce him to obey the Church, without rigour or extreme handling, saying, that if they would defer their proceedings, he would commune the matter with him seriously.

It happened, on that very day, that a pile of heretical books was burnt at St Paul's Cross, Arundel preaching to the people, and stating why they were thus destroyed. Among these was a volume belonging to Lord Cobham, which had been seized at a limner's in Paternoster-row, whither it had been sent to be illuminated. Certain extracts from this volume were laid before the King ; he declared that they were the most perilous and pestilent that he had ever heard ; and demanded of Lord Cobham, whether the volume had not justly been condemned ? Cobham owned that it had ; and being asked why then he had kept and perused such a book ? replied, that he had never read in it more than two or three leaves. That the book might have contained propositions which he condemned, though he approved of its general tendency, is a probability which every man may understand ; and that Lord Cobham was not one who would seek to shelter himself by a paltry subterfuge, is proved, not only by his final but by his immediate conduct. For when Henry admonished him, that as an obedient child he should acknowledge himself culpable and submit to his mother, the Holy Church, the Christian knight made this magnanimous answer : " You, most worthy Prince, I am always prompt and willing to obey ; unto you (next my eternal God) owe I my whole obedience ; and submit thereunto (as I have ever done) all that I have either of fortune or nature, ready at all times to

fulfil whatsoever ye shall in the Lord command me. But as touching the Pope and his spirituality, I owe them neither suit nor service; for so much as I know him by the Scriptures to be the great Antichrist, the son of perdition, the open adversary of God, and the abomination standing in the holy place." Upon this the King turned angrily away, and authorised Arundel to proceed against him to the uttermost.

Lord Cobham, perhaps, relied at this time upon his popularity and his strength. He retired to Cowling Castle in Kent, which was his favourite place of residence; and though the age was past in which a baron could, from his stronghold, defy with impunity the royal power, the sumner, who was sent to cite him before the ecclesiastical authorities, was afraid to perform his errand. Upon this the Archbishop introduced his sumner under the protection of a person in the King's service, who informed Cobham it was the King's pleasure that he should obey the citation. But he, who knew his life was aimed at, and for no offence, except that of disbelieving a gross and palpable superstition, replied that he would not consent to these devilish practices of the priests. His feelings were those of a powerful baron in turbulent times; he thought himself strong in the attachment of his vassals and of the surrounding country; and the system of persecution which had been introduced with the Lancastrian dynasty, he regarded as a new and intolerable tyranny, which it behoved him to resist. It was soon represented, and probably understood, that any person who should attempt to cite him personally, would be in danger of death. Letters citatory were therefore twice affixed upon the great gates of Rochester Cathedral, and they were twice taken down and destroyed. But the ecclesiastical power was too strong to be thus baffled. Arundel excommunicated him, cited him afresh, with a threat, that if the summons were not obeyed, he would proceed to extremities, . . . and called upon the secular power, on pain of the church's censures, to assist him against this seditious apostate, schismatic, and heretic, the troubler of the public peace, enemy of the realm, and great adversary of all holy Church.

These measures, if he had persisted in his course, must soon have involved him in a hopeless struggle with the King's power. In better reliance, therefore, upon a good cause, than upon popular favour and his own means of resistance, he wrote a paper, which he entitled, "The Christian Belief of the Lord Cobham;" and with this he went to the King, trusting, it is said, to find

mercy and favour at his hand. The writing began with the Apostles' creed, to which a larger declaration of his faith was added. Like Wicliffe, he expressed an opinion that the Church was divided into three parts, the Saints in Heaven, the Souls in Purgatory,* and the Faithful on earth: but he qualified this admission of a Purgatory, by saying, if any such place be in the Scriptures. The latter, or Church Militant, he said, was divided, by the just ordinance of God, into the three estates, of Priesthood, Knighthood, and the Commons, who, by the will of God, ought to aid, and not to destroy, each other. The duty of the priests was that, secluded from all worldliness, they should conform their lives to the examples of Christ and his Apostles, evermore occupied in preaching and teaching the Scriptures purely, and in giving wholesome examples of good living to the other two degrees; more modest also, more loving, gentle, and lowly in spirit should they be, than any other people. The Knighthood, under which term he comprised all who bear sword by law of office, ought to defend God's laws, and see that the Gospel were purely taught; yea, rather to hazard their lives, than suffer such wicked decrees, as either blemish the eternal Testament of God, or impede its free passage, and thus give rise to heresies and schisms; for from no other source did they, in his judgment, arise, than from "erroneous constitutions, craftily first creeping in under hypocritical lies, for advantage. They ought also to preserve God's people from oppressors, tyrants, and thieves; and to see the clergy supported, so long as they teach purely, pray rightly, and minister the sacraments freely. And if they see them do otherwise, they are bound by the law of office to compel them to change their doings." The duty of the common people was, "to bear their good minds and true obedience to the fore-said ministers of God, their kings, civil governors, and priests;" . . . justly to occupy every man his faculty, be it merchandise, handicraft, or the tilth of the ground, and so one to be helper to another. He then professed his full belief that the body and blood of Christ were verily and indeed contained in the sacrament of the altar, under the similitudes of bread and wine; that the law of God was most true and perfect; and that they which did not so follow it in their faith and works (at one time or another) could not be saved: "whereas he that seeketh it in faith, accepteth it, learneth it, delighteth therein, and performeth it in love, shall taste for it the felicity of everlasting innocency.

* These constituted the *Church Dormant*. *fant*, Concile de Pise, t. ii. 287. Council So, after Wicliffe, John Hus taught, *L'En-* of Constance, (Eng. Trans.) vol. i. 44.

Finally, that God will ask no more of a Christian believer, in this life, than to obey the precepts of this most blessed law. If any prelate require more, or any other kind of obedience than this, he contemneth Christ, exalting himself above God, and so becometh an open Antichrist." He required that the King would cause this his confession of faith to be justly examined by the wisest and most learned men of the realm; that if it were found in all points agreeing to the truth, it might be so allowed, and he himself thereupon holden for none other than a true Christian; or that it might be utterly condemned, if it were found otherwise, provided always that he were taught a better belief by the word of God, which word he would at all times most reverently obey.

The Edwards would have rejoiced in so high-minded and honourable a subject as Lord Cobham was proved to be by this manly declaration of his views and sentiments. But Henry V. had delivered his heart and understanding into the keeping of the prelates, and he refused to receive the paper, ordering it to be delivered to those who were to be his judges. Cobham then desired that he might acquit himself, according to the old principle of law, from all heresies, by the oath of a hundred knights and squires, who would appear in his behalf. But the new ecclesiastical law superseded all feudal forms, as it violated all principles of justice. This, therefore, was disregarded, as was his appeal to the laws, when, in perfect accordance with the feelings of his rank and the spirit of the times, he offered to fight for life or death, with any man living, Christian or Heathen, in this quarrel of his faith, the King and the Lords of his Council alone excepted. Finally, he declared that he would refuse no correction which should be ministered to him after the laws of God, but always with all meekness obey it. But when the King allowed him there in his presence to be personally cited, Lord Cobham perceived that his destruction was determined on, and rejecting the Archbishop as his judge, appealed from him to the Pope. It has been seen in what light he regarded the Pope; and this appeal must have been made for the purpose of gaining time. It was disallowed, and he was immediately committed to the Tower, till the day appointed for his examination.

All hope having thus failed him, it remained only to assert the truth, like one who was about to bear witness to it in the flames. He passed the interval of his confinement in preparing accordingly. When he was brought before the Consistory, in the Chapter-house of St Paul's, Arundel addressed him, saying,

that in the last general Convocation he had, by sufficient proof, been found culpable of certain heresies, and being cited, had for his rebellious contumacy in not appearing, been both privately and openly excommunicated. Nevertheless, he might then have obtained absolution, and even now it would not be refused, if he would meekly ask it. Without replying to this, Lord Cobham drew a writing from his bosom, and saying that he would gladly before that assembly make rehearsal of the faith which he held, and intended always to stand to, desired leave to read it. It contained his profession upon the four points which were chiefly objected to him. As to the Sacrament, he declared his belief in a real presence in the form of bread. Concerning Penance, that it was needful for every man who would be saved, to forsake sin, and do due penance for sins which he had committed, with true confession, very contrition, and due satisfaction, as God's law teacheth. Touching images, he held, that they were allowed by the Church, as kalendars for unlearned men, who might thus be reminded of the passion of our Lord, and the martyrdom and holy lives of the saints; but whosoever did to them that worship which is due to God, or put such trust in their help, as he should do in God, or had affection in one more than in another, he committed the sin of idolatry. And for pilgrimages, it was his belief, that they who did not keep the commandments in their lives, would not be saved by pilgrimages; and they who did, would be saved without them. He then delivered in the writing.

They bade him stand aside while they consulted together. Presently, Arundel called to him, "Come hither, Sir John. In this your writing are many good things contained, and right catholic also; we deny it not. But there are other points concerning those articles, whereof no mention is made in this your bill; and therefore ye must declare your mind yet more plainly." He pressed him then with the question, whether material bread remained after consecration; and whether every Christian was not bound to make confession to a priest. Cobham answered, that he would declare his mind no otherwise than was already expressed in that writing. "Sir John," said Arundel, "beware what you do! For if you answer not clearly to these things, (especially at the time appointed you only for that purpose), the law of holy Church is, that compelled once by a judge, we may openly proclaim you a heretic." He answered, "Do as ye think best, for I am at a point!" And to all further question, he only replied by bidding them resort to his bill, for thereby he would

stand to the very death. The business of this wicked day ended in remanding him to the Tower till the ensuing Monday (this being Saturday), and promising to send him these matters in writing, clearly determined, that he might be prepared to answer upon them.

The writing which they sent him, declared it to be the faith and determination of the Church, that neither material bread, nor material wine, remained after the sacramental words were spoken; that every Christian man ought to be shriven to a priest; that Christ ordained St Peter to be his vicar on earth, and granted the same power which he had given him to the Popes of Rome as his successors, wherefore all Christians ought to obey their laws; and that it was meritorious to go on pilgrimage to holy places, and more especially to worship holy relics and images of saints approved by the Church of Rome: and to each of these points the question was added, How feel ye this article?—On the Monday, he was again brought up, but to a different place, and before a larger assembly. At the former examination, the Bishops of London and Winchester, and the Lieutenant of the Tower, were the only persons present. Here at the Dominican Convent, within Ludgate, many canonists and friars, the heads and leading persons of their respective orders, were convened to sit in judgment on him; while a number of priests, monks, canons, and friars, with a rabble of underlings, who were collected as spectators, insulted him as he came, for a horrible heretic, and a man accursed before God. Two notaries were there to record the proceedings, and the Archbishop caused them, and all the prelates and doctors present, to be sworn that they would do their duty faithfully that day; and neither for favour or fear, love or hate, register anything which should that day be spoken or done, but according to the truth, as they would answer before God and all the world at the day of doom.

These preparations, and the certainty of what was to ensue, could not shake the constancy of his resolved mind. But the taunts and mockery of the brutal audience, who came there as to a spectacle, and anticipated with exultation the inhuman catastrophe, disturbed that equanimity which he had hitherto preserved; and moved him, . . . not to unseemly anger, nor aught unworthy of himself, . . . but to an emotion, than which nothing nobler in its kind hath been imagined in fiction, or recorded in history. For when Arundel began the tragedy, by offering him absolution and mercy, if he would humbly desire

it, in due form and manner, as the Church ordained—"Nay, forsooth, will I not," he replied, "for I never yet trespassed against you, and therefore I will not do it!" Then, kneeling on the pavement, and holding up his hands toward heaven, he exclaimed, "I shrive me here unto Thee, my eternal, living God, that in my youth I offended thee, O Lord, most grievously in pride, wrath, and gluttony; in covetousness and in lechery! Many men have I hurt in mine anger, and done many other horrible sins! Good Lord, I ask Thee mercy!" He wept while he uttered this passionate prayer: then, standing up, said, with a mighty voice, "Lo, good people, lo! for the breaking of God's law and His commandments they never yet cursed me! But for their own laws and traditions, most cruelly do they handle both me and other men. And, therefore, both they and their laws, by the promise of God, shall utterly be destroyed!"

When they had recovered from the surprise which this awful appeal produced, they began to examine him concerning his belief. He replied, with the same intrepid spirit, "I believe fully and faithfully in the universal laws of God. I believe that all is true which is contained in the holy sacred Scriptures of the Bible. Finally, I believe all that my Lord God would I should believe." Such faith was not sufficient, under the Papal tyranny, to save him who professed it from the flames. They pressed him with the murderous question concerning material bread. He made answer, "The Scriptures make no mention of this word material, and therefore my faith hath nothing to do therewith. But this I say and believe, that it is Christ's body and bread." They exclaimed against this with one voice; and one of the bishops stood up and said, "it was a heresy manifest, to say that it is bread after the Sacramental words were spoken." The noble martyr replied, "St Paul was (I am sure) as wise as you, and more godly learned, and he called it bread; 'the bread that we brake,' saith he, 'is it not the partaking of the body of Christ?'" The Archbishop then spake of the writing which had been sent him, containing what upon that point had been clearly determined by the Church of Rome and the holy doctors. Lord Cobham replied, "I know none holier than Christ and his Apostles; and as for that determination, it is none of theirs; for it standeth not with the Scriptures, but manifestly against them. If it be the Church's, it hath been hers only since she received the great poison of worldly possessions." He had now become the assailant, and the proceedings resembled a dispute in the schools, rather than the forms of judicial inquiry. "In

your lordly laws and idle determinations," said he, "have I no belief! For ye be no part of Christ's holy Church, as your open deeds do shew: but ye are very Antichrists, openly set against his holy law and will. The laws that ye have made are nothing to his glory, but only for your vain-glory and abominable covetousness."

Upon this the Prior of the Carmelites reproved him for judging his superiors. "Rash judgment," said he, "and right judgment all is one with you. So swift judges always are the learned scholars of Wicliffe!" Lord Cobham replied, "It is well sophistered of you, forsooth! Preposterous are your judgments evermore. For, as the prophet Esay saith, ye judge evil good, and good evil; and therefore the same prophet concludeth that 'your ways are not God's ways, nor God's ways your ways. And as for that virtuous man Wicliffe, I shall say here, both before God and man, that before I knew that despised doctrine of his, I never abstained from sin. But since I learned therein to fear my Lord God, it hath otherwise, I trust, been with me. So much grace could I never find in all your glorious instructions!" To this the Carmelite answered, "It were not well with me if I had no grace to amend my life, till I heard the devil preach. St Hierome saith, 'That he which seeketh such suspected masters, shall not find the mid-day light, but the mid-day devil!'" "Your fathers, the old Pharisees," returned Lord Cobham, "ascribed Christ's miracles to Beelzebub, and his doctrines to the devil; and you, as their natural children, have still the self-same judgment concerning his faithful followers. To judge you as you be, we need no farther go than to your own proper acts. Where do ye find in all God's law, that ye should thus sit in judgment of any Christian man, or yet give sentence upon any other man to death, as ye do here daily? No ground have ye in all the Scriptures, so lordly to take it upon you, but in Annas and Caiaphas, which sate thus upon Christ and upon his Apostles after his ascension!"

A lawyer upon this observed to him, that Christ judged Judas. But Cobham, who was better versed in Scripture, replied, "That Judas judged himself. Indeed," he pursued, "Christ said, 'woe unto him for that covetous act of his,' as he doth yet unto many of you; for since his venom was shed into the Church, ye never followed Christ." Arundel demanded what he meant by that venom? "Your possessions and lordship," replied Lord Cobham; "for then cried an angel* in the air, as your own chro-

* Of this voice from heaven, Fuller says, "I dare boldly say, he that first wrote

nicles mention, 'Woe, woe, woe! this day is venom shed into the Church of God!' Since that time, one pope hath put down another, one hath poisoned another, one hath cursed another, and one hath slain another, and done much more mischief, as all the chronicles tell. Let all men consider well this, that Christ was meek and merciful; the Pope is proud, and a tyrant: Christ was poor, and forgave; the Pope is rich, and a malicious man-slayer, as his daily acts do prove him. Rome is the very nest of Antichrist, and out of that nest cometh all the disciples of him, of whom prelates, priests, and monks are the body, and these piled friars are the tail!" "Alas, sir," said the Prior of the Augustines, "why do you say so? that is uncharitably spoken!" These are the only words of this Prior which are reported in the proceedings, and they imply no uncharitable temper in the speaker; one, perhaps, who would gladly have washed his hands of the innocent blood. But the martyr, who saw him only as he was, prepared to go through with the murderous business in which he was engaged, replied, "Not only is it my saying, but also the prophet Esay's, long before my time; 'the prophet, saith he, 'which preacheth lies, is the tail behind.'"

Master as he was of the subject, strong in his cause, sure of the issue, and therefore fearless of it, and armed with Scripture, the Court felt his superiority; and one of the canonists, that they might come without further delay to the condemnation, took from his bosom a copy of the writing which had been sent him, and interrogated him upon the four points; to all of which he replied openly and resolutely. When he denied that worship was due to images, a friar asked him, if he would worship the cross upon which Christ died? "Where is it?" said Lord Cobham. The friar replied, "I put the case that it were here even now before you?" "This is a great wise man," said Lord Cobham, "to put me an earnest question of a thing, yet he himself knoweth not where the thing is! I ask you, what worship I should do unto it?" An ignorant clerk answered, "Such worship as Paul speaketh of, and that is this: 'God forbid that I should joy, but only in the Cross of Christ Jesus.'" Lord Cobham spread forth his arms, and said, "This is a very cross; yea, and so much better than your cross of wood, in that it was created of God; yet will I not seek to have it worshipped!" (It was a favourite remark with the reformers, when they argued against

it, never heard it, being a modern author." (Church History, p. 24). And he ascribes the story to Johannes Nanclerus, Presi-

dent of the University of Tübingen, in the year 1500. Here, however, is proof that the fable was current a century earlier.

the use of the crucifix, that there was no other true image of God, but man, who in that image had been created). The Bishop of London upon this observed, "Sir, ye wote well that he died on a material cross!" "Yea," answered Lord Cobham, "and I wote also, that our salvation came not in by that material cross, but by him which died thereupon!"

The Archbishop now thought proper to close an argument, in which the accused person had so palpably the advantage of his judges and accusers. "Sir John," said he, "ye have spoken here many wonderful words to the slanderous rebuke of the whole spirituality, giving a great evil example unto the common sort. We must now be at this short point with you. Ye must submit yourself, and have none other opinion in these matters, than the universal faith and belief of the Holy Church of Rome, or else throw yourself (no remedy!) into most deep danger. See to it in time, for anon it will be too late!" "I will none otherwise believe in these points," was the resolute reply, "than that I have told you here afore; do with me what ye will!" "Well, then," said Arundel, "I see none other, but we must needs do the law!"

He stood up, all the assembly vailing their bonnets, and began, "In the name of God!" "Lord Cobham," he said, "having been detected and presented at the lawful denouncement and request of our universal clergy, we proceeded against him according to the law, (God witness!) with all the favour possible. And following Christ's example in all we might, which willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live, we sought all ways to bring him to the Church's unity. And though we found him in the Catholic faith far wide, and so stiff-necked that he would not confess his error, nor purge himself, nor yet repent him thereof, we yet pitying him of fatherly compassion, appointed him a competent time of deliberation, to see if he would seek to be reformed; but seeing that he is not corrigible, we are driven to the very extremity of the law, and with great heaviness of heart we now proceed to the publication of the sentence definitive against him."

This issue had been so clearly foreseen, that the Archbishop came with the sentence written. It began by taking Christ to witness, that His glory was the only thing sought in these whole proceedings; and saying, that the worthiness of the cause weighed first on one side, and the unworthiness of this child of iniquity and darkness on the other, his fault also being

aggravated through his damnable obstinacy, it condemned Lord Cobham for a most pernicious and detestable heretic, and committed him as such to the secular power, to do him thereupon to death. Furthermore, the sentence excommunicated and denounced him accursed; and not him alone, but all who should in any way receive, defend, counsel, help, or maintain him: and this sentence was to be published and explained from the pulpit, throughout all dioceses, in cities, towns, and villages, at such times as they should have most concourse of people; to the end that, upon the fear thereof, the people might fall from their evil opinions, conceived of late by seditious preaching.

When Arundel had finished this wicked and inhuman sentence, Lord Cobham said to him with a firm voice and courageous countenance, "Though ye judge my body, which is but a wretched thing, yet am I certain and sure that ye can do no harm to my soul, no more than could Satan upon the soul of Job. He who created that, will of his infinite mercy and promise save it; I have therein no manner of doubt. And as concerning these articles before rehearsed, I will stand to them even to the very death, by the grace of my eternal God!" Turning to the spectators then, he spread his hands, and spake with a louder voice, saying, "Good Christian people, for God's love be well 'ware of these men! for they will else beguile you, and lead you blindling into hell with themselves. For Christ saith plainly unto you, 'If one blind man leadeth another, they are like both to fall into the ditch!'" Then kneeling down before them, he prayed for his enemies,—“Lord God Eternal! I beseech thee, of thy great mercy's sake, to forgive my pursuers, if it be thy blessed * will!”

Their victim was now remanded to the Tower, and the remainder of his history is perplexed by contradictory statements, from which nothing certain can be collected, except the results. It is said that a respite of fifty days was obtained for him, at Arundel's desire. An abjuration was put forth in his name, which he, by aid of his friends, contradicted; setting up bills in

* From the account here faithfully given of this most interesting trial, it will appear evident, as Mr Turner has well stated in his valuable History of England (vol. ii. 307), that Lord Cobham's guarded confession might have satisfied his persecutors, if conciliation had been their object; but that they pursued him with questions, which left no choice between falsehood and condemnation. It is fit, however, that the

reader should know in what manner the recent and able historian, Dr Lingard, speaks of this trial; he says that Lord Cobham's conduct was "*as arrogant and insulting as that of his judge was MILD and dignified*" (Hist. of England, vol. iii. 335). It is fitting, indeed, that we should know in what manner an English Roman Catholic historian speaks of such transactions, *at this time*.

various parts of London, wherein he declared, that he never varied, in any point, from that confession which he had made before the clergy, and which he had taken care to have published at the time. The Lollards were certainly numerous, and he had, as his character and talents deserved, many devoted friends, by whose help he escaped from the Tower. The ensuing transactions are inexplicably mysterious. The King was informed that the Lollards had formed a plot for murdering him and his brothers at Eltham. He removed immediately to Westminster, and was then told, that they were assembling from all quarters in the Ficket Field behind St Giles's, to act at a certain hour under Lord Cobham, and burn the Abbey, St Paul's, St Alban's, and all the friaries in London. In the middle of the night, the King ordered his friends to arm, that he might anticipate these enemies. He was urged to wait till daylight, that he might see who were with him and who against him, and he was advised also to collect an army, if there was a formidable body to be opposed; but with such men as at this immediate and unreasonable summons could be got together, he went out during a Christmas night, to the place stated by his informer, and found only a few persons there, who being asked what they wanted there, said, . . . the Lord Cobham. It is said, that unless the precaution had been taken of guarding the city gates, these people were to have been joined by fifty thousand servants and apprentices. In opposition to this most improbable story, it is asserted, that the persons whom the King found in the fields were collected there to hear a midnight preaching, because they could not assemble without danger by day; . . . and this tale, considering the season of the year, is as little credible as the former. It is not unlikely that a conspiracy may have been formed for raising the rightful family to the throne, and that the Lollards had embarked in it as a party, in the expectation of obtaining toleration at least, if not the triumph of their doctrines. What secret information there may have been of this does not appear; open evidence there is none. The prisons in and about London were filled; and nine and thirty persons, the chief of whom was Sir Roger Acton, who is described as a man of great ability and possessions, were suspended by chains from a gallows in Ficket Field, and in that manner burnt alive, for heresy and treason. A large reward was offered for taking Lord Cobham alive or dead; so faithfully, however, was he sheltered, notwithstanding all who harboured him incurred the same danger as himself, that he eluded his persecutors for four years, till he was disco-

vered by means of the Lord Powis, in Wales. He stood resolutely upon his defence, and would probably not have been taken alive, if a woman had not broken his legs with a stool. In this condition he was carried to London in a horse-litter; and there being hung by the middle in chains, was consumed in the flames,* praising God with his latest breath. . . . It was not in England only that this noble martyr prepared the way for the Reformation. Apprehending that the writings of Wicliffe, by which, through the grace of God, his own heart had been changed, might be destroyed by the diligence with which they were now sought out and burnt, he was careful to have them multiplied, and therefore had copies made "at his own great cost and charge,"† which he found means of sending to Bohemia, where this work was understood, and where Huss had now appeared as the precursor of Luther.

A new statute was enacted upon the pretext of these "great rumours, congregations, and insurrections," which, it was said, were designed to destroy the Christian faith, the King, and all other estates, spiritual and temporal, all manner of policy, and finally the laws of the land. That the words may not seem to imply more falsehood than was intended, it should be remarked, that by Christian faith, faith in Transubstantiation was meant. That there were, among the Lollards, some fanatics who held levelling opinions in their utmost extent, may be well believed: it is the extreme stage of enthusiasm, and that extremity the circumstances of the times were likely to produce. But it is worthy of notice, that in all the records which remain of this persecution, in no one instance has the victim been charged with such principles. In every case they were questioned upon those points which make the difference between the reformed and the Romish religion; in every case they were sacrificed as burnt-offerings to the Mass. For the more effectual punishment and suppression of their opinions, the statute enjoined that all persons employed in civil offices, from the Chancellor downwards, should swear, upon their admission to office, that they would put forth their whole power and diligence to destroy Lollardy.

The cruelties in England must not be ascribed to the personal character of Arundel and the other persons who instigated them; though, beyond all doubt, these men, had they been of a more Christian temper, might have prevented them: they pro-

* He suffered as a heretic, not as a traitor. His indictment for high treason is a forgery. See HOWELL'S *State Trials*, vol. i. 254, 265.

† Bale, *Conclusyon to Leland's New Year's Gift*. Lives of the Oxford Antiquaries, vol. i.

ceeded from the system which the Papal Church had adopted, of supporting its authority and its abuses by fire and sword. The Council of Constance, by whose execrable sentence Huss and Jerome of Prague were burnt alive, condemned Wicliffe also as an obstinate heretic, and ordered that his remains, if they could be discerned from the bodies of other faithful people, should be dug up and consumed by fire. Accordingly, by order of the Bishop of Lincoln, as Diocesan of Lutterworth, his grave, which was in the chancel of the church, was opened, forty years after his death; the bones were taken out and burnt to ashes, and the ashes thrown into a neighbouring brook, called the Swift. "This brook," says Fuller,* "conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean: and thus the ashes of Wicliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over." "So," says Fox, "was he resolved into three elements, earth, fire, and water, thinking thereby utterly to extinguish and abolish both the name and doctrine of Wicliffe for ever. But as there is no counsel against the Lord, so there is no keeping down of verity; it will spring and come out of dust and ashes, . . . as appeared right well in this man. For though they digged up his body, burnt his bones, and drowned his ashes, yet the word of God and truth of his doctrines, with the fruit and success thereof, they could not burn. These, to this day, remain."

The Papal Church, by its pretensions to infallibility, had precluded itself from retrieving any error into which it had fallen, or reforming any abuses and corruptions which it had sanctioned: and therefore, even those persons who conscientiously maintained its doctrines upon all other points, and even zealously defended them, were, if they ventured to express the slightest hesitation upon this main article, regarded and treated as heretics. Proof of this was given in the treatment of Reynold Pecock, Bishop of Chichester, a man of great ability and rare moderation, who perceiving errors and evils on both sides, would fain have held an even course between the extremes, and have conciliated the Lollards, by conceding to them what was untenable, while he argued against them convincingly upon some of their most popular, but least reasonable tenets. He reasoned against a preposterous tenet which the Bible-men, as he called them, advanced, that nothing was lawful unless it were appointed in the Scriptures, by which we were to be absolutely guided, as a rule of life, even in things indifferent. This error was not derived from Wicliffe; for he

* B. iv. p. 171.

expressly affirmed that human ordinances might be accepted, when they were grounded in good reason, and were for the common profit of Christian people; and Pecock justly maintained, that it was not the purport of revelation to teach anything which might be discovered without it. That there were abuses in the adoration of images among the simple and ignorant, he admitted; but insisted that they were remediable harms; . . . differing in this from Wicliffe, who thought that, though not unlawful in themselves, they gave such occasion of idolatry, that they ought to be destroyed. With regard to pilgrimages, he affirmed it was not true that all places are alike in God's sight, since God chooses to dispense His favours in one place rather than in another, and in the manner of His own approving, rather than of man's advising; but he recommended those who sought for spiritual improvement, rather to seek it in reading and hearing the Word of God, than by "haunting, as it were, always the exercise in such visible signs." He agreed with the Lollards, in reprehending such preaching as that of the ignorant and superstitious friars, whose sermons were filled with absurd legends, and who inculcated nothing so zealously as the duty of employing their order to say masses for the deliverance of souls from purgatory. But though he censured these pulpit-bawlers, as he called them, he nevertheless maintained, that by means of such itinerants as the friars, the people were made better than they would have been without them; and he shewed the utility of monasteries, were it only for the effect they produced, as places whither the great sometimes withdrew for the purpose of religious retirement. The charges which were brought against the Bishops for not preaching, he answered openly and fairly, by maintaining that they were not bound by their office to preach to the common people, but rather were free from that burthen; their business was to have knowledge of those matters which the inferior clergy should preach: for themselves, they had higher duties, and more useful work. He insisted also, that they were not bound to residence, when they might be better employed elsewhere.

Bishop Pecock did not, like Arundel and too many other prelates, hunt out the Lollards, for the purpose of bringing them to the stake. Many of the chief persons among them conversed familiarly with him upon subjects which it had been death to touch upon before a persecutor; he deserved their confidence, and even won their affection, by the patience with which he listened to them; . . . he could always, he says, have made their

case stronger than they did themselves. But while he was thus serving his own Church effectually, by unexceptionable means, he fell under its censure himself, for declaring that the pretension of infallibility could not be maintained, and that Holy Writ was the only standard of revealed truth. The implicit faith which the Church upon this ground required in all its institutions, as he saw that it shocked the understanding of reasonable and conscientious men, so he perceived that it was deeply prejudicial to religion, and expressed his strong feeling concerning it in this prayer: "O thou Lord Jesus, God and Man, head of Thy Christian Church, and teacher of Christian belief, I beseech Thy mercy, Thy pity, and Thy charity; far be this said peril from the Christian Church, and from each person therein contained; and shield Thou that this venom be never brought into Thy Church: and if Thou suffer it to be any while brought in, I beseech Thee that it be soon again outspit. But suffer Thou, ordain, and do, that the law and the faith which Thy Church at any time keepeth be received, and admitted to fall under this examination, whether it be the same very faith which Thou and Thine Apostles taught or no, and whether it hath sufficient evidences for it to be very faith or no."

A charge of heresy was therefore brought against him, for teaching that the Church was fallible: other accusations were added, some of which seem intended to excite a popular cry against him, and also to bring him into disgrace with the Government. Duke Humphrey had been his patron, and they who had brought about the murder of the Duke extended their hatred to him. That which should have been a merit in the eyes of the Papal Court, was imputed to him as a crime, . . . his assertion, that the Pope, having a right to all benefices, might, in the disposal of them, reserve to himself what part of the revenues he thought fit, without being guilty of simony; since, as rightful lord, he sold only what was his own. Another imputed crime was, his opinion that the goods of churchmen are not the goods of the poor, but are as much their own property as are the temporal estates of those who have them by inheritance. Another, that it was not necessary to salvation to believe that our Saviour descended into hell. There were other charges, which were merely frivolous, turning wholly upon verbal subtleties. He was condemned, however, upon all, and had then to choose between abjuration and martyrdom.

Let no one reproach the memory of Bishop Pecock, because martyrdom was not his choice! It was well said by the worthy

Fuller, "Oh, there is more required to make a man valiant, than only to call another coward." His principles were not those which demanded that he should bear witness against the Roman Church in their behalf. He was the able and dutiful defender of that Church, not its enemy; his life had been spent in supporting it, and in endeavouring to refute or conciliate its opponents: consistently, therefore, with the tenor of that life, he chose rather to sacrifice his judgment, and perhaps truth also, in submitting, than to suffer death for opposing it, and thus strengthen, as undoubtedly such an execution would have strengthened, the cause of the Lollards. And considering the extreme humiliation to which he submitted, it can hardly be doubted but that death would have been the preferable alternative, had he not acted under a sense of duty. He was brought in his Episcopal habit to St Paul's Cross, in the presence of twenty thousand people, and placed at the Archbishop's feet, while fourteen of his books were presented to the Bishops of London, Rochester, and Dunholm, as judges. These books he was ordered to deliver with his own hands to the person by whom they were to be thrown into the fire, there ready for that purpose. Then standing up at the Cross, he read his abjuration in English, confessing that, presuming upon his own natural wit, and preferring the natural judgment of reason before the Scriptures and the determination of the Church, he had published many perilous and pernicious books, containing heresies and errors, which he then specified as they had been charged against him. "Wherefore, regarding himself as a miserable sinner, who theretofore had walked in darkness, but now by the mercy of God was reduced into the right way, and that he had wickedly infected the people, he openly revoked and renounced these heresies, committed himself as a penitent sinner to the correction of the Church and his Lord of Canterbury; and required all persons, as they tendered their souls and his, to deliver in all writings of his which they might have in their keeping; that the same might be openly burnt for an example and terror to others." As many copies as could be collected were then brought forward, and consumed in the fire.

It remains now to state, what were the tender mercies of the Romish Church to this eminent man (the most learned of his age and country), who had thus humbly and thoroughly submitted to its authority. That his enemies in that Church insulted him with a malice which was at once venomous and grovelling, is only what may always be expected from mean and malignant minds; but the treatment which he received can only

be imputed to the immitigable spirit of the Papal tyranny and its agents. He was sent to Thorney Abbey, there to be confined in a secret closed chamber, out of which he was not to be allowed to go. The person who made his bed and his fire, was the only one who might enter and speak to him, without the abbot's leave, and in his presence. He was to have neither pen, ink, nor paper, and to be allowed no books, except a mass-book, a psalter, a legendary, and a Bible. For the first quarter, he was to have no better fare than the common rations of the convent; afterwards, the pittance of a sick or aged brother, with such further indulgence as his health might require; for which, and for fitting up his close apartment, the prior was allowed eleven pounds. In this dismal imprisonment Pecock died. But carefully as his writings were sought for, and destroyed, some of them remained to preserve his memory, and bear witness to his learning, his moderation, and his worth.*

If such was the severity which the Romish Church exercised toward the ablest of its defenders, what were those persons to expect who detested its doctrines, when they fell into the hands of its inhuman ministers? The civil wars, which in all other respects were so frightful to humanity, had the good effect of affording them a respite. In Fuller's beautiful words, "the very storm was their shelter."† But when the struggle ceased, the business of persecution was resumed; and Henry VII., while he asserted his authority over the clergy, found it consistent with his policy to employ them, rather than his nobles, in state affairs, and suffered them to proceed against the Lollards with the utmost rigour. Among the victims whom they brought to the stake, was a woman of some quality, Joan Boughton by name, the first female martyr in England: she was more than eighty years of age,‡ and was held in such reverence for her virtue, that, during the night after her martyrdom, her ashes were collected, to be preserved as relics for pious and affectionate remembrance. Her daughter, the Lady Young,§ suffered afterwards the same cruel death, with equal constancy. At Amersworth, when William Tylsworh was burnt, his only daughter, as being suspected of heresy, was compelled, not only to witness his death, but with her own hands to set fire|| to him! And in

* Lewis's Life of Bishop Pecock. Only 200 copies of this work were printed. The Clarendon press has lately republished it among the other services which it is rendering to our Ecclesiastical History, and to English Literature.

† B. iv. p. 190.

‡ Fox, i. p. 829.

§ Ibid. ii. p. 5.

|| Ibid. i. p. 878. 9th edition.

like manner, when John Scrivener was put to death for the same cause at Lincoln, his children were constrained to kindle the faggots.* By such barbarities did the Romish Church provoke the indignation of God and man. That it should have made one real convert, by such means, is impossible; though it compelled many to abjuration. In that case, the miserable wretches whom it admitted to its mercy were made to bear a faggot in public; while they witnessed the martyrdom of those who had more constancy than themselves. They were fastened to a stake by the neck with towels, and their hands held fast, while they were marked† on the cheek with a hot iron; after which, they were for life to wear a faggot, worked or painted on the left sleeve; and if they ventured to lay aside this badge, which, if they were in humble life, consigned them to want as well as infamy, they were sent to the flames without remission: . . . so that it became a saying, Put‡ it off and be burnt; keep it on and be starved. Bishop Nix, of Norwich, one of the most infamous for his activity in this persecution, used to call the persons whom he suspected of heretical opinions, “men savouring of the frying pan;”§ . . . with such levity did these monsters regard the sufferings which they inflicted! Erasmus|| writes from Cambridge to a friend in London, that the price of wood was increased that winter because of the heretics; and his friend replied that he was not surprised at it, when so many were burnt, and yet they were found to increase.

CHAPTER XII.

OVERTHROW OF THE PAPAL POWER IN ENGLAND.

WHILE the clergy, by these cruelties, excited in the people a just hatred of a system which was supported by such means, other causes were preparing the way for a religious revolution. The Government, though it permitted and even encouraged persecution, never deviated from that course of policy which Edward I. had begun, for limiting the Papal authority in England,

* Fox, ii. p. 40.

† Ibid. i. p. 872.

‡ Fuller, b. v. 165.

§ The French had an equivalent phrase, *sentir le fagot*.

|| Eras. Epist. l. viii. Ep. 8, 9. p. 410,

412. I am sorry to observe that Erasmus expresses nothing like pity in this place for the sufferers. He says, *Istis hæreticis, vel hoc nomine sum iniquior, quod instante brumâ nobis auxerint lignorum præcium*.

and checking its extortions. Full efficacy to what he intended was given by the statute of *Præmunire*, in Richard the Second's reign; which, though mainly designed to prevent the Pope from granting English benefices in reversion, struck at the root of his power, by making it highly penal to procure from him any instrument in diminution of the authority of the Crown. The Popes could never obtain a repeal of this, which they called an execrable statute against the Church, and the head of the Church. Even the Lancasterian Kings, while they endeavoured to root out Lollardy with fire, adhered to the example of their predecessors, in maintaining the rights of the Crown; and when Cardinal Beaufort, by consent of Parliament, was made one of the King's Council, a protestation was required from him, that he would absent himself when any matters between the King and the Pope were to be treated.

As early as Henry the Fourth's reign, the clergy were alarmed by notices, that the convent lands were in danger of being claimed by the State; and though Henry, at the commencement of his usurpation, assured them that he desired only their prayers, and not their money, they made him from time to time large grants, for the purpose of averting this danger. The measure was renewed upon the accession of Henry V., and a bill was exhibited, praying that temporal lands devoutly given, but disordinately spent by spiritual persons, should be seized into the King's hands; and stating that these lands might suffice to maintain, for the King's honour and defence of the realm, fifteen earls, 1500 knights, 6200 esquires, 100 alms-houses for the poor and impotent, with a surplus of £20,000 for the King's coffers. How many poor and impotent were to be deprived of support by the proposed transfer, how many artificers and labourers thrown out of employment, what schools of useful education broken up, how many persons of studious and retired habits cast adrift on the world, and how many houses of hospitality closed, were matters of which the promoters of such a scheme thought as little as they cared. But it was for the purpose of diverting the King's attention to other objects, that the Primate advised him to claim the crown and engage in the conquest of France.

The enemies, whom the wealth of the Church tempted to assail it, were more dangerous than those who opposed its corrupt doctrines and superstitious practices. Against the latter it could defend itself by aid of the secular arm; something too was effected by the learning and ability of those prelates whom Henry

VII., the most sagacious prince of his age, had promoted; and more might have been done by the timely correction of abuses so gross, that the Romanists of the present age are reduced, in the face of notorious facts, to deny what they find it impossible to defend. But when its wealth had once become an object of cupidity to the Government, the enemies, whom its corruptions had provoked and its cruelties incensed, were ready to league with any allies against it, and reform and spoliation went hand in hand.

Few princes have succeeded to a throne under such propitious circumstances as Henry VIII., or with so many personal advantages. He found the kingdom at peace, the treasury rich beyond all former example, the country prosperous, the royal authority firmly established. Trade was flourishing, the liberal arts in a state of rapid advancement, and learning rising as it were from the dead. A new world had just been opened to the spirit of adventure, and the discovery of printing was already beginning to change the character of the old. To a great part of the nation he was endeared as the representative of the House of York; and the severe temper of his father, and the fiscal tyranny which his father's ministers had exercised, secured for him that popularity, of which the people are always prodigal when their hopes are raised. With every advantage of person, he united a high degree of bodily and mental accomplishments; his understanding was quick and vigorous, and his learning such as might have raised him to distinction, had he been born in humble life. Had he died before his mind was depraved, and his heart hardened by sensuality and the possession of absolute power, his death would have been regretted as a national calamity.

The splendour of his Court exceeded anything which had ever been seen in Europe. A succession of feasts and pageants was exhibited there, with so profuse an expenditure, that, in less than three years, the whole accumulation of his father's reign, amounting to the then enormous sum of £1,800,000, was* consumed. But it was no less remarkable for learning; in this respect we have the testimony of Erasmus, that no school, no monastery, no university equalled it. Both in his prodigality, and in his patronage of letters, the King was encouraged by his favourite, Wolsey, the most munificent of men. Under his administration, the disorders of the clergy were repressed, men of worth and learning were promoted in the Church, libraries were

* Burnet, Reformation, i. 2.

formed, and the study of Greek and Hebrew introduced at Oxford. The practices and doctrines of the Church Wolsey took as he found, and so he would have left them; but he removed its ignorance, reformed its manners, and might have enabled it yet awhile to have supported itself by the improvements which it derived from his liberality and love of learning, if a more perilous but needful reformation had not commenced, when Luther proclaimed the principles of religious liberty which he had derived from Huss, and Huss from Wicliffe.

Little could it have been apprehended, when Henry engaged in controversy with Luther, and for so doing obtained from the Pope the title of Defender of the Faith, that the Reformation, under his auspices, would be introduced into England. A speech of the court fool upon that occasion has been preserved: * "O, good Harry, let thou and I defend one another, and let the faith alone to defend itself." The same turn of mind which led him thus to come forward as the champion of the Church became accidentally the cause of his defection from it, when he applied his casuistry to the purpose for which that art has usually been employed, that of making his conscience conform to his inclinations. He was desirous of male issue; he was weary of his wife, who had ceased child-bearing; and he was in love with Anne Boleyn. Queen Catharine was by manners and disposition better suited for a convent than a court; . . . she was pious and noble-minded, but now of infirm health, and always of a melancholy constitution. Had she possessed his affections as she did his esteem, it is not likely that he would have fallen into scruples concerning the lawfulness of the marriage, because she had been his brother's widow; but the scruple accorded with his wishes; and it suited also so well with his predilection for subtleties, that from whatever motive it may at first have been entertained, there is abundant proof of his having been sincere in it when the question was brought before the world.

The question is one which admits of an easy and decisive solution. The impediment was not founded upon natural and moral law; therefore it was dispensable by that authority in which the dispensing power was vested; and having been dispensed with, it would be manifestly unjust to revoke a dispensation which had been acted upon in good faith. But any case may be perplexed by legal subtleties, when law has been made a craft, and this question was suited to the age; for hitherto all active intellects throughout Christendom had been exercised

* Fuller, b. v. p. 168.

only in spinning the snares of disputation, . . . and it was but in this generation that a course of healthier studies had been opened. The point was so doubtful, according to the notions which then prevailed, that the French ambassador objected, on this score, to a marriage proposed between Francis I., or his brother, and the Princess Mary; and when it came to be discussed by all the canonists throughout Europe, opinions were divided.

The Queen demeaned herself during the proceedings with a true dignity, to which history has rendered justice, and from which, I believe, no writer has ever yet been base enough to detract. There was a deeper sorrow in her heart, than what her own wrongs occasioned; she had not offended, she said,* . . . but it was a judgment of God, for her former marriage had been made in blood. King Ferdinand, her father, had stipulated that the Earl of Warwick should be put to death, for the purpose of securing the succession to her issue, and Catharine felt that this innocent life was visited upon her.† The Pope would have made little demur in granting a divorce, had he not feared to offend her nephew, the Emperor; his policy was to prolong the suit; “whilst ‡ it depended, he was sure of two great friends; but when it should be decided, of one great foe.” A strange compromise was proposed by Henry, that if the Queen would not take the vows, and thus, by retiring into a convent, consent to their divorce, a dispensation for having two wives might be granted him, which it was pretended was sanctioned by the Old Testament; both the Pope§ and the Emperor agreed to this, and probably the only reason why the matter was not thus accommodated, was an apprehension of the just scandal which such a measure would excite. The Court of Rome sought, therefore, to protract the suit, in hopes that the not improbable death of the Queen, or some other of those accidents to which human affairs are subject, might extricate it from its embarrassment. But Henry, who had fixed his affections, such as they were, upon Anne Boleyn, with singular constancy for such a man, during the process, was not of a temper patiently to brook seven years’ delay; and perceiving that nothing was to be looked for from the Pope, but a continuance of studied procrastination, resolved to act in defiance of him.

Henry’s penetration enabled him always to select men of ability for his service. Among the eminent persons whom he

* Bacon’s Henry VII. p. 196.

† “She was wont to acknowledge the death of her two sons as heaven’s judgment on her family for the murdering

of this earl.” *Fuller’s Worthies*, vol. ii. p. 407.

‡ Fuller, *Ch. Hist.* b. 4. p. 177.

§ Burnet, i. p. 60, 93.

had raised to importance for their qualifications, Cromwell and Cranmer were peculiarly fitted to promote the object which he had now in view, of withdrawing the Church of England from its subjection to the See of Rome, the former from interested, the latter from conscientious motives. Thomas Cromwell is a man whom the Romanists paint in the blackest colours, because they estimate the characters of men who distinguished themselves in that age, by no other criterion than their service or disservice to the Papal cause; neither justice, therefore, nor charity is to be found in their representations. Of Cromwell it may truly be said, that many who have entertained better principles have been worse men. The desire of obtaining promotion and keeping it, was his ruling motive; and to this he made his conduct subservient. He was bold and unscrupulous; but if any redeeming virtues may atone for a time-serving ambition, they were to be found in him. In the most selfish, the most ungrateful, the most cruel age of English history, he was generous, grateful, and compassionate; and it was by the fidelity with which he served his first patron, Wolsey, when that munificent man was disgraced and ruined, that he acquired the good opinion of the King. Cranmer, on the contrary, was a meek, unworldly spirit, courageous only when the strong sense of duty enabled him to overcome his natural temper. Widely dissimilar as they were in other respects, there was a bond of friendship between them in their generous and benevolent feelings, and in these unhappily little sympathy was to be found elsewhere.

By Cromwell's suggestion, Henry resolved to declare himself head of the Church in his own dominions; and the same politic minister devised a means, whereby the submission of the clergy to this decisive measure was secured. The statute of *Præmunire* had been so little observed, before it was made the engine for Wolsey's overthrow, that almost all the higher clergy had become amenable to its penalties; and when this charge was brought against them, they were glad to compound by paying the heavy sum of £100,000, and acknowledging the King's supremacy, with the qualifying clause *quantum per Christi leges licet*. This great measure was soon followed by the divorce, which was pronounced in the King's own Court, and by his marriage with Anne Boleyn.

Hitherto the system of persecution had been carried on with unabated rigour, if, indeed, the progress of the reformed opinions openly in Germany, and rapidly everywhere else, did not rather provoke the clergy to stricter vigilance, and a more exasperated

vengeance. Children were compelled to accuse their parents, and parents their children, wives their husbands, and husbands their wives, unless they would share the same fate. The poor wretches who saved their lives by abjuration, were under the name of perpetual penance condemned to perpetual bondage, being distributed in monasteries, beyond the precincts of which they were never to pass, and where by their labour they were to indemnify the convent for their share of such food as was regularly bestowed in charity at the gate. The mark of the branding-iron they were never to conceal; they were to bear a faggot at stated periods, and once at the burning of a heretic, . . . for which purpose every one who contributed a faggot, was rewarded with forty days' indulgence.

Among the martyrs of those days, Thomas Bilney is one whose name will ever be held in deserved reverence. He had been brought up from a child at Cambridge, where, laying aside the profession of both laws, he entered upon what was then the dangerous study of divinity; and being troubled in mind, repaired to priests, who enjoined him in masses, fasting, watching, and the purchase of indulgences, till his scanty purse and feeble constitution were both well-nigh exhausted. At this time, hearing the New Testament which Erasmus had just published, praised for its Latinity, he bought it for that inducement only; and opened it upon a text, which, finding his heart open, rooted itself there: . . . "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." The comfort which these words conveyed, was confirmed by the frequent perusal of a book which now became to him sweeter than honey, or the honey-comb; and he began to preach as he had learnt, that men should seek for righteousness by faith. It was not long before he was accused before Cuthbert Tonsal, then Bishop of London, a man of integrity and moderation, though compelled to bear a part in proceedings which were utterly abhorrent to his natural disposition. The main accusations against him were, that he asserted Christ was our only Mediator—not the Virgin Mary, nor the Saints; that pilgrimages were useless; and that offerings to images were idolatry. Of these doctrines he was found guilty; but was persuaded to recant, and accordingly bore a faggot at St Paul's Cross. It appears that Tonsal, with his wonted humanity, favoured and wished to save him: he was not branded, nor subjected to any further punishment, but permitted to return to Cambridge.

From that hour Bilney had no peace in himself. Latimer, who was at that time Cross-keeper in the University, and who was one of his converts, describes him as having fallen into so deep a melancholy, that his friends were fain to be with him day and night, fearing to leave him alone, and seeking to comfort him, who would not be comforted, not even by religion, for "he thought the whole Scriptures were against him, and sounded to his condemnation." In this state he continued nearly two years, till feeling that death was better than to live thus self-condemned, he overcame the weakness of his nature, and resolved by a brave repentance to expiate an offence, for which he should otherwise never forgive himself. Without communicating the purpose to his friends, he took leave of them one night in Trinity Hall, saying, he would go up to Jerusalem, and should see them no more. Immediately he departed into Norfolk, and there preached, not only secretly in houses among the reformed, but openly in the fields, confessing how he had fallen, and publicly declaring his repentance, and warning all men by his example to beware how they denied the truth, for which it was their duty, if need were, to lay down their lives. It was not long before he was apprehended in Norwich, for giving an English New Testament to a recluse, or anchoress, in that city; and immediately Nix, the merciless Bishop of that diocese, sent to London for a writ to burn him.

The Sheriff, to whose custody he was delivered, happened to be one of his friends, and therefore treated him with every kindness which could be afforded during his imprisonment. The night before he was to suffer, some friends who visited him, found him at supper eating heartily, and with a cheerful countenance; and one of them saying he was glad to see him refresh himself thus, so shortly before he was to undergo so painful a death, he replied, "I follow the example of those who, having a ruinous house to dwell in, hold it up by props as long as they may." Another observed, that his pains would be short, and the Spirit of God would support him in them, and reward him afterward with everlasting rest. Bilney, upon this, put his finger into the candle which was burning before him, more than once. "I feel," said he, "by experience, and have long known by philosophy, that fire is naturally hot; yet I am persuaded by God's holy Word, and by the experience of some saints of God therein recorded, that in the flame they may feel no heat, and in the fire no consumption. And I constantly believe, that, however the stubble of this my body shall be wasted by it, yet my

soul and spirit shall be purged thereby, . . . a pain for the time, . . . whereon followeth joy unspeakable." And then he repeated the words of Scripture, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, and called thee by thy name; thou art mine own. When thou goest through the water I will be with thee, and the strong floods shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest in the fire, thou shalt not be consumed, and the flame shall not burn thee; for I am the Lord thy God, the holy One of Israel, thy Saviour!" This text he applied to himself, and to those who were present, some of whom, receiving the words as the legacy of a blessed martyr, had them fairly written in tables, or in books, and derived comfort from them till their dying day.

On the following morning he was led to execution. One of his friends exhorting him at the prison door with few and secret words, to take his death patiently and constantly, Bilney answered, "When the mariner is tossed upon the troubled sea, he beareth his perils better in hope that he shall yet reach his harbour; so, whatever storms I shall feel, my ship will soon be in its quiet haven; thereof I doubt not, by the grace of God; . . . and I entreat you, help me with your prayers, to the same effect." The place of execution was a low valley, surrounded with rising ground, without the Bishop's Gate. It was chosen for these executions, that the people might see the spectacle from the ascent, as in an amphitheatre; and from the frequency of such spectacles, it was called the Lollard's Pit. There was a ledge upon the stake to raise the victim, that he might be the better seen; for the persecutors were desirous of displaying to the utmost these inhuman executions, not understanding that though many hearts would be hardened by such sights, and many intimidated, there were not a few also which would be strengthened and inflamed. Having put off the layman's gown, in which, after his degradation, he had been clad, he knelt upon the ledge, and prayed with deep and quiet devotion, ending with the 143d Psalm, in which he thrice repeated the verse, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." He then put off his jacket and doublet, and remained in his hose and shirt, and so was chained to the stake. Some friars came to him, and said the people imputed his death to them, and for that reason would withhold their alms; wherefore they entreated him to assure the spectators, that it was not their act. Bilney, upon this, said with a loud voice, "I pray you, good people, be never the worse to these men for my sake, as though they were the authors of my death: it was not

they." The dry reeds were then kindled ; and in a few minutes, Bilney, triumphing over death, rendered up his soul in the fullness of faith, and entered into his reward.

The heart of man is strong when it is put to the proof ; and those were times which tried the heart. These dreadful spectacles were attended, not by the brutal multitude alone, who came as to a pastime, and by those who, for the sake of gratifying their curiosity, chose to endure the sight : the friends and fellow-believers of the sufferer seem generally to have been present as an act of duty ; they derived, from his example, strength to follow it, when their hour should come ; and to him it was a consolation to recognise sympathising faces amid the crowd ; to be assured, that in his agony he had their silent, but fervent, prayers to support him ; and to know that, as faithful witnesses, they would do justice to his memory, which else was at the mercy of his enemies. For it was one of the pious frauds of the Romanists, to spread reports that their victims had seen and acknowledged their error, when too late to save their lives, and had asked pardon of God and man for their heresies, with their latest breath. This last wrong was offered to Bilney, and it would have been fatal to his good name on earth, the falsehood having been believed and published by Sir Thomas More, if Parker, in whose primacy the Church of England was afterwards established by Elizabeth, had not attended at this martyrdom, for the love which he bore the martyr, and established the truth by his unquestionable testimony.*

Bilney's example, in all parts, was followed by James Bainham, of the Middle Temple, the son of a Gloucestershire knight. Having been flogged and racked, without effect, to make him accuse others of holding the same opinions as himself, the fear of death induced him to abjure, and bear a faggot. But a month had scarcely elapsed before he stood up in the face of the congregation in St Austin's Church, with the English Testament in his hand, and openly proclaiming that he had denied the truth, declared that, if he did not return to it, that book would condemn him at the day of judgment ; and he exhorted all who heard him, rather to suffer death, than fall as he had fallen, for all the world's good would not induce him again to feel such a hell as he had borne within him since the hour of his abjuration. He was accordingly brought to the stake in Smithfield, and there, to the astonishment of the spectators, when his extremities were half consumed, he cried aloud, "O ye Papists, ye look for

* Fox, ii. 211-228.

miracles, and behold a miracle; for in this fire I feel no pain; . . . it is to me as a bed of roses!"* The fact may be believed, without supposing a miracle, or even recurring to that almost miraculous power which the mind sometimes can exercise over the body. Nature is more merciful to us than man to man; this was a case in which excess of pain had destroyed the power of suffering; no other bodily feeling was left but that of ease after torture: while the soul triumphed in its victory, and in the sure anticipation of its immediate and eternal reward.

The book which Bainham held up in the church, when he proclaimed his repentance, and his readiness to die for the truth, would alone have been sufficient to draw upon him inquiry and persecution. It was Tindal's translation, now one of the rarest volumes in the collections of the curious; and in its effects upon this nation, the most important that ever issued from the press. Nothing more is known of the translator's origin, than that he was born somewhere upon the borders of Wales. Having been bred up from a child at Oxford, and graduated there, and studied afterwards awhile at the other University, he was engaged in the family of a Gloucestershire knight, Welsh, by name, as tutor to his children. Open house was kept there, and the table being frequented by abbots, deans, and the other higher clergy of the country, the conversation turned often upon Luther and Erasmus, and other points which were the touchstones of men's minds. In these conversations, Tindal declared his opinions with so much freedom, and pressed them sometimes with so much force, that, at length, for his own safety, and for the sake of the family which favoured him, he deemed it necessary to withdraw. He was eminently one of those fit instruments which are never wanting when any great design of Providence is to be brought about; a man devoted to learning, zealous for the truth, of irreproachable life, and moderate desires, wishing for nothing more than a yearly income of ten pounds for his subsistence, and a situation in which he might teach children and preach the word of God.

Itinerant preaching excited no surprise in those days, because it was practised by the friars. He preached awhile about the country, and more particularly about Bristol, and in that part of the city which was then called St Austin's Green. Experience had made him cautious; and his opinions, when he addressed the people, were probably rather to be inferred from his silence upon dangerous points, than from his words. For at this time

* Fox, ii. 245-249.

he had formed the intention of translating the New Testament ; the language of Wicliffe's version had become obsolete, and it was also a prohibited book. Tindal meant to render it from the original Greek, and entertained a hope of doing it under Tonsal's protection, whom Erasmus had so " extolled for his learning and virtue, that he thought no lot could be more desirable for him, nor more suitable to his purpose, than to be received into the Bishop's service." He presented himself, therefore, with a recommendatory letter from Sir Henry Gilford, the King's Controller, and an oration of Isocrates translated from the Greek. But Tonsal's establishment was full, and he was taken into the house of Humphrey Monmouth, a wealthy and benevolent citizen, who inclined to the principles of the Reformation. This liberal man bestowed exhibitions at that time upon many deserving men at the Universities, some of whom rose to great distinction ; approving of Tindal's views and intentions, he engaged to supply him with ten pounds a year : other good men contributed something, and Tindal embarked for Hamburg, travelled into Germany, where he conferred with Luther and others of the great Protestant Divines, and then settling at Antwerp, as the best place for printing his book and securing its transmission to England, completed the New Testament there.

Tindal had perceived, he said, that it was impossible to establish the people in any truth, except the Scriptures were plainly laid before them in their mother tongue, that they might see the process, order, and meaning of the text. The Romanists understood perfectly well how little the practice of their Church was supported by Scripture ; and that if the Ark of the Covenant was admitted, Dagon must fall. No sooner, therefore, was it discovered that copies of this translation were industriously dispersed in England, and eagerly bought, than Archbishop Warham and Tonsal prohibited it, as being corrupted with articles of heretical pravity, and opinions erroneous, pernicious, pestilent, scandalous, tending to seduce persons of simple and unwary dispositions ; and they issued orders and monitions for bringing them in and burning them. Tonsal himself, who of all the Romish Prelates was the most averse to the cruelties in which he was engaged, employed a merchant secretly to purchase the copies that remained in Tindal's hands, as the easiest and surest mode of preventing their dispersion. The agent in this transaction was secretly a friend of Tindal, who, being very desirous of correcting the translation, gladly sold them, and

with the money which he thus obtained, printed an improved edition.

A spirit had now been roused, which no persecution could suppress. Dangerous as it was to possess the book, it was eagerly sought for; and of those persons who dispersed it, some were punished by penance and heavy fines; others, who preached and avowed its doctrines, by the flames. A brother of Tindal, with two others concerned in circulating these Testaments, were sentenced to pay the enormous fine of £18,840 and ten-pence; and they were made to ride* with their faces to the horse's tail, papers on their heads, and as many of the condemned books as they could carry fastened to their clothes all around them, to the standard in Cheapside, and there, with their own hands, throw the copies which had been seized into the fire. But burning the Testament appears to have excited some surprise and displeasure, even in those who regarded the burning of those who read it as an affair in the regular course of things. Tonstal, therefore, who saw with what effect the press was employed against the Romish Church, requested Sir Thomas More to write and publish against Tindal's translation, and the other condemned books written by Tindal and his coadjutors, for which purpose a license was granted him to read them. Well had it been for humanity, if no other means had ever been employed for opposing or extending the principles of the Reformation.

Sir Thomas More is represented, by the Protestant Martyrologists, as a cruel persecutor; by Catholics, as a blessed martyr. Like some of his contemporaries, he was both. But the character of this illustrious man deserves a fairer estimate than has been given it, either by his adorers or his enemies. It behoves us ever to bear in mind, that while actions are always to be judged by the immutable standard of right and wrong, the judgment which we pass upon men must be qualified by considerations of age, country, situation, and other incidental circumstances; and it will then be found, that he who is most charitable in his judgment, is generally the least unjust. Sir Thomas More would, in any age of the world, have ranked among the wisest and best of men. One generation earlier, he would have appeared as a precursor of the Reformation, and perhaps have delayed it by procuring the correction of grosser abuses, and thereby rendering its necessity less urgent. One generation later, and his natural place would have been in Elizabeth's council, among the pillars of the state, and the founders

* Strype's Cranmer, 81.

of the Church of England. But the circumstances wherein he was placed were peculiarly unpropitious to his disposition, his happiness, and even his character in after-times. His high station (for he had been made Chancellor upon Wolsey's disgrace) compelled him to take an active part in public affairs; in forwarding the work of persecution, he believed that he was discharging not only a legal, but a religious duty; and it is but too certain that he performed it with activity and zeal. "The Lord forgive Sir Thomas More," were among the last words which Bainham uttered amid the flames. The Protestants who, by his orders, and some of them actually in his sight, were flogged and racked, to make them declare with whom they were connected, and where was the secret deposit of their forbidden books, imputed the cruelty of the laws to his personal inhumanity. In this they were as unjust to him as he was in imputing moral criminality to them; for his was one of those unworldly dispositions which are ever more willing to endure evil than to inflict it. It is because this was so certainly his temper and his principle, that his decided intolerance has left a stain upon his memory; what in his contemporaries was only consistent with themselves and with the times, appearing monstrous in him, who in other points was advanced so far beyond his age. But by this very superiority it may partly be explained. He perceived, in some of the crude and perilous opinions which were now promulgated, consequences to which the Reformers, in the ardour and impatience of their sincerity, were blind: he saw that they tended to the subversion, not of existing institutions alone, but of civil society itself: the atrocious frenzy of the Anabaptists in Germany confirmed him in this apprehension; and the possibility of re-edifying the Church upon its old foundations, and giving it a moral strength which should resist all danger, entered not into his mind, because he was contented with it as it stood, and in the strength of his attachment to its better principles, loved some of its errors and excused others. Herein he was unlike his friend Erasmus, whom he resembled equally in extent of erudition and in sportiveness of wit. But More was characteristically devout; the imaginative part of Romanism had its full effect upon him: its splendid ceremonials, its magnificent edifices, its alliance with music, painting, and sculpture (the latter arts then rapidly advancing to their highest point of excellence), its observances, so skilfully interwoven with the business, the festivities, and the ordinary economy of life, . . . in these things he delighted, . . . and all these the Reformers were

for sweeping away. But the impelling motive for his conduct was, his assent to the tenet that belief in the doctrines of the Church was essential to salvation. For upon that tenet, whether it be held by Papist or Protestant, toleration becomes, what it has so often been called, . . . soul-murder; persecution is then, in the strictest sense, a duty; and it is an act of religious charity to burn heretics alive, for the purpose of deterring others from damnation. The tenet is proved to be false by its intolerable consequences, . . . and no stronger example can be given of its injurious effect upon the heart, than that it should have made Sir Thomas More a persecutor.

The first of his controversial works was not unworthy of its author. It was in the form of a dialogue with one whose mind had been unsettled by the new doctrines; and the worse cause had the better advocate. It was, however, not uncandidly or unfairly managed. Sir Thomas seemed willing to take the opportunity of commenting upon some scandalous practices, while he defended the Church of Rome on all main points; and this was done with characteristic pleasantry, not the less likely to please because of its occasional coarseness, in good humour with the disputant, kindly in manner, always with an appearance of reason, and sometimes cogently. Still it was strongly tinged with the bitterness of the Romish spirit, and the heretics were spoken of as branches cut from the vine, and reserved only for the fire, first* here, and afterwards in hell. The dialogue was answered by Tindal: and More, in his subsequent writings, degenerated into the worst form of controversy, and its worst temper.

Two men of great note among the Reformers, wrote in defence of Tindal and his opinions. Robert Barnes, the one, had been Prior of the Augustines in Cambridge, but after bearing a fag-got, had escaped beyond sea. The other, John Frith, was one of the Cambridge men whom Wolsey removed to the college which he had founded at Oxford, a proof in what estimation he was held for his abilities, conduct, and attainments. It was soon discovered that many of these persons inclined to the new doctrines: Frith among others: he had, in fact, become the disciple and friend of Tindal, during Tindal's abode at Cambridge. Some of them died in consequence of confinement in an unwholesome cellar: their death excited Wolsey's compassion, and he ordered the others to be released, on condition of their remaining within a certain distance of Oxford. Frith, however, fled to the Con-

* Dialogue, ff. 47.

tinent, and, returning, after a few years, was apprehended as a vagabond at Reading, and set in the stocks. The schoolmaster of the town, hearing him bewail himself in Latin, entered into conversation with him, and, finding him an accomplished scholar, procured his liberty. It appears that he had come over to diffuse his opinions at all risks; and yet with a fervour which approached to enthusiasm in his love of the truth, and his devotion to it, few of the Reformers were so temperate in their opinions. In this his own cool judgment accorded with the advice of Tindal, that avoiding high questions, which surpass common capacity, and expounding the law so as to convince men of sin, he should "set abroad the mercy of our Lord and Saviour," and let wounded consciences drink of the living waters. The manner in which Tindal, writing to him at the time, speaks both of himself and his friend, will shew what these men were, whom Sir Thomas More described as fit only for the fire here, and hereafter! "There liveth not," he says, "in whom I have so good hope and trust, and in whom my heart rejoiceth, as in you; not the thousandth part so much for your learning, and what other gifts else you have, as because you will creep a-low by the ground, and walk in those things that the conscience may feel, and not in the imaginations of the brain; in fear, and not in boldness; in open necessary things, and not to pronounce or define of hid secrets, or things that neither help nor hinder, whether it be so or no; in unity, and not in seditious opinions: insomuch that if you be sure you know, yet, in things that may abide leisure, ye will defer and let it pass; and stick you stiffly and stubbornly in earnest and necessary things. And I trust you be persuaded even so of me; for I call God to record, that I never altered one syllable of God's word" . . . (More had accused him of so doing) . . . "against my conscience; nor would this day, if all that is on the earth, whether it be pleasure, honour, or riches, might be given me . . . If there were in me any gift that could help at hand and aid you, if need required, I promise you I would not be far off, and commit the end to God . . . But God hath made me evil-favoured in this world, and without grace in the sight of men; speechless and rude, dull and slow-witted. Your part shall be to supply what lacketh in me, remembering, that as lowliness of heart shall make you high with God, even so meekness of words shall make you sink into the hearts of men. Nature giveth age authority, but meekness is the glory of youth."

When this letter was delivered to him, he was a prisoner in the Tower, a paper of his, upon Transubstantiation, written by

the desire of one of his friends, having been treacherously delivered to Sir Thomas More, who thereupon used all means for discovering him, and finally succeeded, though he repeatedly changed his dress and his place of abode. To the arguments which More published against his treatise, Frith replied from prison, with great ability and great moderation; not shrinking from avowing his entire disbelief in a corporeal presence, but desiring only that men might be left to judge upon that point as God should open their hearts, no party condemning the other, but nourishing brotherly love, and each bearing with the other's infirmity. The like he said concerning Purgatory, requiring that a belief in it should not be insisted on as essential to salvation. Many peradventure would marvel, he observed, seeing he would have these things be left indifferently unto all men, whether to believe or not, what then was the cause why he would so willingly suffer death? "The cause," said he, "why I die is this; for that I cannot agree that it should be necessarily determined to be an article of faith, and that we should believe, under pain of damnation, the bread and wine to be changed into the body and blood of our Saviour, the form and shape only not being changed. Which thing, if it were most true (as they shall never be able to prove it by any authority of the Scripture, or doctors), yet shall they not so bring to pass, that that doctrine, were it never so true, should be holden for a necessary article of faith."

Tindal, hearing of his danger, encouraged him by his letters to suffer constantly. They who abjured, he said, and afterwards repented, and died to witness their repentance, afforded their enemies occasion to malign their memory; so that though their death was accepted with God, it was not glorious, and lost in great part its effect upon others. . . . "Your cause," said he, "is Christ's Gospel, a light that must be fed with the blood of faith. The lamp must be dressed daily, and that oil poured in evening and morning, that the light go not out." He encouraged him by the doctrine of fatalism, (which Tindal had adopted, and upon which More had victoriously attacked him), and by a better reliance upon God. "Yield yourself," said he; "commit yourself wholly and only to your loving Father; then shall his power be in you, and work for you above all that your heart can imagine. If the pain be above your strength, remember 'whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will give it you,' and pray to your Father in that name, and he shall cease your pain, or shorten it."

Frith needed not these stirring exhortations from a friend who, as he well knew, was ready to act as he advised. When he was taken to Croydon, for examination, by two of the Archbishop's people, the men were so won by his discourse, and so unwilling to lead him like a sheep to the slaughter, that they devised a plan for letting him escape, and proposed it to him. Upon his refusing with a smile, and saying that he was not afraid to deliver his opinion, they asked him, wherefore then he had been willing to fly before he was apprehended, if now he did not think proper to save himself? He answered, "I would then fain have enjoyed my liberty, for the benefit of the Church of God; but being now by his providence delivered into the hands of the bishops, to give testimony to that doctrine which I am bound to maintain, . . . if I should now start aside, I should run from my God, and be worthy of a thousand hells. Bring me, therefore, I beseech you, where I was appointed to be brought; or else I will go thither alone." Being at length brought for final examination before Stokesley and Gardiner, the Bishops of London and Winchester, both distinguished for the severity with which they enforced the persecuting laws, . . . he was by them condemned as a wicked and stiff-necked heretic, persisting with damnable obstinacy in his detestable opinions; for which they excommunicated him, and left him to the secular power; "most earnestly," said the sentence, "requiring them, in the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ, that this execution and punishment, worthily to be done upon thee, may be so moderate, that the rigour thereof be not too extreme, nor yet the gentleness too much mitigated." Could any heresy be more detestable and more impious than such language?

One Andrew Hewet, a young tailor, who was taken up as a suspected person, and on his examination had declared, that he believed concerning the Sacrament as Frith did, was told, that if he persisted in that opinion, he should be burned with him. And upon his expressing his resolution to follow Frith's example, he was sent to the same prison, and taken with him to Smithfield, where they were fastened to the same stake, back to back. The Romanists notice the simple sincerity of this young man with a sneer, and make no remark upon the execrable inhumanity of those who burned him alive for it. When they were at the stake, a priest admonished the people in no wise to pray for them, no more than they would for a dog; words which excited indignation in the multitude, but moved Frith only to a compassionate smile, and a prayer that the Lord would forgive such

persecutors. He suffered with that constancy which was to be expected from so true a courage, and so firm a faith; and his last expression which could be understood, was one of thankfulness, that the wind having carried the force of the fire to the other side of the stake, had shortened the sufferings of his companion in martyrdom. Tindal did not long survive his friend. A villain, by name Henry Philips, who had been an English student at Louvain, by a long and most odious scheme of treachery, betrayed him into the hands of the Emperor's Court at Brussels: and he was put to death at Vilvorde, by a more merciful martyrdom than would have been his lot in England, being strangled at the stake before he was burnt.

To so excellent a man as Tindal, who was "without spot or blemish of rancour or malice, full of mercy and compassion, so that no man living was able to reprove him of any kind of sin or crime" (thus he is described by those who knew him), death could at no time be unwelcome in such a cause. And he had already seen, that owing to his efforts, though not by his means, his countrymen would have the Scriptures in their own tongue, and thus his heart's desire would be accomplished. Henry's marriage with Anne Boleyn, as it had been preceded by his separation from the authority of the Church of Rome, was followed by a reformation of its doctrines. Upon Warham's death, Cranmer was made Primate; one of his first measures was to procure a resolution from both houses of Convocation, to request his Majesty that the Scriptures should be translated by some learned men, whom he should appoint, and delivered unto the people according to their learning; and before Tindal's martyrdom, Miles Coverdale's Bible was allowed to be used. Tindal had published the Pentateuch and the Book of Jonah from the Hebrew; the Psalter and some other portions, had been published by George Joye, but Coverdale's was a complete version; and this book, printed, it is supposed, at Zurich, was not only allowed in England, but its use enjoined; injunctions to the clergy being issued by the King's authority, that the whole Bible, both in Latin and English, should be placed in the quire of every parish church; and that all men should be encouraged and exhorted to read it as the very word of God, that thereby they might the better know their duty to God, their sovereign lord the King, and their neighbour.

This most important change was brought about by Cranmer, with Cromwell's aid, and through the Queen's favour. The decided manner in which Anne Boleyn promoted the great religious

change occasioned by Henry's desire of marrying her, has given historical importance to a life, which otherwise would only have afforded a theme for tragedy. Of what importance it was to the Reformation, may be seen by the fiendish malignity with which her story has been blackened. That event, to which England owes her civil as well as her intellectual freedom, is represented by the Romanists as disgraceful in its origin, flagitious in its course, and fatal in its end. The Church of England canonises none of its benefactors; it is even blameable for paying no honours to the memory of those virtuous men by whose exertions it was founded, and who laid down their lives in its service. It regards Anne Boleyn as a woman, who encouraged in the King an attachment, from which the sense of duty ought to have made her turn away. The splendour of a crown had dazzled her; and he who beholds in the events of this world that moral government which is sufficiently apparent, sees that, in her otherwise unmerited fate, she was punished for this offence. But the Romanists were in that age so accustomed to falsehood, that they could not abstain from it, even when truth might have served their cause. With characteristic effrontery they asserted, that her mother and her sister had both been mistresses of the King; that she was his own daughter; and that her nominal father, Sir Thomas Boleyn, reminded him of this, to prevent, if possible, the incestuous marriage, but in vain. They described her as a monster of deformity and wickedness. In this spirit their histories of our Reformation were composed, till they perceived that such coarse calumnies could no longer be palmed upon the world, and then they passed into an insidious strain, little less malicious, and not more faithful.

It was by Queen Anne's influence that Bilney's convert, Latimer, was made Bishop of Worcester. He, more than any other man, promoted the Reformation by his preaching. The straightforward honesty of his remarks, the liveliness of his illustrations, his homely wit, his racy manner, his manly freedom, the playfulness of his temper, the simplicity of his heart, the sincerity of his understanding, gave life and vigour to his sermons when they were delivered, and render them now the most amusing productions of that age, and to us perhaps the most valuable. The public feeling was now in favour of reformation, though even the leaders in that work knew not as yet how far they should proceed. But the Romanists had injured their own cause, and the martyrs had not offered up their lives in vain. Frith's case, in particular, had shocked the people. They had

seen him kiss the stake, and suffer with the calm intrepidity of conscious virtue, full of hope and faith ; and when they saw so young, so learned, and so exemplary a man put to this inhuman death, for no crime, . . . not even for teaching heretical doctrines, but merely because he would not affirm that a belief in Purgatory and in the corporeal presence was necessary to salvation, many even of those who believed in both were shocked at the atrocious iniquity of the sentence. The effect appeared in Parliament ; and an act was passed, by which the clergy were deprived of the power of committing men on suspicion of heresy, or proceeding against them without presentment or accusation. Presentments by two witnesses at least were required, and then they were to be tried in open court. In other respects, the laws, inhuman as they were, were left in force. The age was not yet ripe for further mitigation, but this was a great and important step.

The Romanists injured themselves by their craft, as well as their cruelty. A nun in Kent was encouraged to feign revelations ; at first, for the purpose of bringing a particular image into repute, . . . afterwards, a political bearing was given to the imposture : she declared strongly against the divorce while the cause was pending, and predicted, that if Henry persisted in his purpose and married another wife, he should not be King a month longer, nay, not an hour in the sight of God, but should die a villain's death. Her prophecies were collected in a book, and repeated in sermons, particularly by the Observant Franciscans, one of whom, preaching before the King, told him that many lying prophets had deceived him, but he, as a true Micaiah, warned him that the dogs should lick his blood, as they had done Ahab's. The ferocity of Henry's heart had not yet been awakened ; he bore this treasonable insolence with patience, and noticed it no further than by desiring another preacher to comment upon it the ensuing Sunday. But when it was perceived that the accomplices in this scheme of delusion, emboldened by impunity, had communicated with Queen Catharine and with the Pope's Ambassadors, the affair assumed a serious aspect, and the parties were apprehended. They confessed the imposture, and with this public exposure it might probably have ended, had not other accomplices spread a report that the Nun had been forced into this confession, and tampered with her to make her deny all that she had confessed. She was then executed, with five of her associates, for treason, acknowledging the justice of her sentence, and saying, these men, who must have known she

was feigning, persuaded her that it was the work of the Holy Ghost, because what she feigned was profitable to them, . . . and thus they had brought themselves and her to this deserved end.

Among the persons who were implicated for misprision of treason in this affair, was Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, an old and venerable man, but who had been forward in persecuting the Reformers, and acted on this occasion with culpable remissness, for which credulity was no excuse. Cromwell advised him to write to the King, acknowledge his offence, and ask for pardon, which he knew the King would grant. But a blind party-spirit possessed the old man; he wrote back saying, that having a high opinion of the Nun's holiness, and believing, by what is said in the Prophet Amos, that God will do nothing without revealing it to his servants, he had sometimes spoken with the Nun, and sent his chaplain to her, for the purpose of trying the truth, and had never discovered any falsehood in her: and for what she told him about the King, he thought it needless to communicate it, because she said she had told it to the King herself; and, moreover, she had named no person who should kill him, which, by being known, might be prevented. Therefore he had not thought himself bound to denounce her, and desired, for Christ's sake, that he might no more be troubled about the matter, otherwise he would speak his conscience freely. Cromwell, in reply, exposed the futility and impropriety of such an answer. He appealed to Fisher's conscience, whether, if the Nun had prophesied for the King, he would have given such easy credit to her; told him, that if it came to a trial, he must be found guilty; and again assured him of pardon, if he would ask for it, . . . the Bishop's persistence in refusing to do this was plainly a matter of obstinacy, not of conscience.

Sir Thomas More also was accused of having communicated with the Nun, and being so far concerned with her, as to bring him within reach of the statute. But he acted with more judgment and better temper, when Cromwell, who was his friend, invited him, in like manner, to exculpate himself. He had heard of her, he said, eight or nine years ago, when the King put into his hands a roll containing certain words, which, according to report, she had spoken in her trances, but which he thought such as any silly woman might utter. Afterwards he had heard other of her revelations; some very strange and some very childish. Nevertheless, thinking her to be a pious woman, he had visited her once, and desired her prayers, and written to her, advising

her to beware how she meddled with affairs of state. A copy of this letter he sent to Cromwell. It expressed more belief in her revelations than Sir Thomas ought to have given, after she herself had told him that the devil was caught in her chamber one day, in the shape of a bird, which when it was taken, changed into such a strange ugly shape, that they threw him out of the window in their fright. A meritorious deed, he said, had been done in bringing this detestable hypocrisy to light; and, for himself, he had neither in this matter done evil, nor said evil, nor so much as any evil thing thought. All that had passed, he had here fully declared; and if, said he, "any man report of me, as I trust verily no man will, and I wot well truly no man can, any word or deed by me spoken or done, touching any breach of my legal truth and duty toward my most redoubted Sovereign and natural liege Lord, I will come to mine answer, and make it good in such wise as becometh a poor true man to do, that whosoever any such thing shall say, shall therein say untrue."

The explanation availed, as it ought. But Sir Thomas had resigned the Chancellorship, when Henry had determined upon divorcing himself in defiance of the Papal authority: this had given offence, and Henry was a man upon whose heart enmity took deeper hold than love. He had formerly delighted in More's delightful conversation; but when Sir Thomas's son-in-law congratulated him one day on the favour which he enjoyed, the King having walked in his garden with him, with an arm* about his neck, he replied, "I thank God, I find his Grace my very good Lord and Master, and I do believe he doth as singularly favour me, as he doth any subject within this realm. Howbeit, son Roper, I have no cause to be proud of it; for if my head would win him a castle in France, it should not fail to fly from my shoulders, as fast now as it seemeth to stick." Perceiving now in what direction the current had set, and how probable it was that some perilous question might arise, in which he must sacrifice either his conscience or his life, the alternative had not occasioned a moment's doubt, and he had endeavoured to prepare his family for the worst. This he did as if it were sportively, in tenderness to them, alarming them once or twice with a false messenger summoning him to appear before the Council, and often taking occasion to remark, that a man might lose his head and be never a whit the worse. When the real summons came, he would not suffer his wife and children to accompany him to his boat, as they were wont to do, but kissing them, and desiring

* Life of Sir T. More, in Dr Wordsworth's *Ecc. Biog.* vol. ii. p. 79.

their prayers, pulled the wicket after him. For a while he sat in the boat, with a heavy heart, in silence; then thanked God that the field was won, and resumed his habitual cheerfulness.

The matter upon which he was called for was the oath of the succession, which he had apprehended. No other layman had yet been summoned to swear it: in fact, there was none whose example would carry with it so much weight. Having read the Act and the Preamble, which maintained the lawfulness of the divorce, Sir Thomas said, he would swear to the succession, but not to the Preamble; not that he either condemned the oath, nor the conscience of any man that took it, but take it himself he could not, without jeopardizing his soul to perpetual damnation. They required him to declare his reasons, which he declined, and observed, that seeing to declare them was dangerous, it was no obstinacy to leave them undeclared. . . . This had never been allowed when men were compelled to declare their opinion concerning the corporeal presence, and then burnt for declaring it. In the conversation which ensued, Cranmer pressed him with able arguments, and Cromwell with earnest kindness, to obey the King; but Sir Thomas rested the matter upon his conscience, which, he said, after long leisure and diligent search, had concluded plainly against obedience in this case, whatever might mis-happen. He was therefore committed to the Abbot of Westminster's keeping, till the Council should have determined how to proceed. Fisher had, in like manner, offered to swear to the Act, but refused the Preamble. If Cranmer's advice had been taken, this would have been deemed sufficient; he represented that the succession was the main thing, and it might well suffice, if the whole realm, by the example of these persons, should be brought to maintain it, though there might be some who, either of willfulness, or of an indurate and invertible conscience, would not alter from their opinion of the King's first marriage.

This advice was wise as well as humane, and Cranmer wisely rested it upon grounds of policy. Cromwell was not wanting in desire to save a man whom he highly esteemed; but Henry was a Sovereign not to be dissuaded from his purposes, and, judging of other men's feelings by his own, he looked upon More and Fisher as his determined and dangerous enemies. It was unfortunate for both, that they took precisely the same course, and alleged the same reasons for it; for this, though but a natural coincidence in men who acted upon the same principles, was imputed by Henry to a concerted system of opposition to his

government. This opinion was strengthened when some leading members of the Carthusians denied the King's supremacy, which it had now been made treasonable to deny. Several were brought to trial for this, and executed as traitors; and though some of these victims had expressed their hopes for a successful rebellion against one whom they called a tyrant and a heretic, and others were implicated in the imposture of the Nun, still, suffering as they did, for a point of conscience, their execution brought the first stain upon the Reformation in England. For the law created the offence which it punished so severely. It was essential that the King's supremacy should not be opposed; and it was necessary also, for the establishment of this fundamental principle, that it should be recognised by the heads of the clergy. The proper course would therefore have been, that this recognition should be required from all who chose to retain their professional rank and preferment. Upon those who made their choice rather to resign, no further restraint ought to have been imposed, than that, as in other cases, and under pains and penalties proportionate to the offence, they should do nothing in opposition to what was now the law of the land. But the barbarous manners of the middle ages had hardly yet perceptibly been mitigated; and laws retain their barbarity long after manners have been softened. The nation had been accustomed to the most inhuman executions, for political as well as religious causes; so that actions, which no man can now contemplate without abhorrence, were regarded by them as in the ordinary course of affairs. They who felt differently were advanced beyond their age, if at this time there were any such persons, of which there is no proof.

Henry's appetite for cruelty had not yet been kindled, and he appears reluctantly to have put these Carthusians to death. Some of them were men of family and learning. They had at first concurred with their brethren in convocation, to acknowledge the supremacy which they now denied. This change, therefore, seemed to him not to proceed so much from conscience, as to be connected with designs which might shake his throne. He would fain have persuaded them to submission, and used all means for that purpose; a scruple of conscience, whether right or wrong, is more likely to be confirmed than removed by such negotiations; and when threats are held out to enforce persuasions, they are sometimes unwillingly fulfilled, because they have been despised, and lest it should be thought that they were made without the intention of fulfilling them. But when an evil course

is thus begun, it is persisted in oftentimes from obstinacy and pride. Henry had the feelings of an absolute king; such in reality he was; the civil wars had broken the power of the barons, and his father's policy had completed what that long struggle had begun; he had rendered the Church dependent upon him, and the Commons had not risen into power. Parliament, therefore, was the mere instrument of his will, and the only check upon him was what might be found in the integrity of his counsellors, the best and wisest of whom too often found it necessary to acquiesce in what they deeply regretted and disapproved.

When the King perceived that neither imprisonment, nor the execution of the Carthusians, shook Sir Thomas More's resolution, he ordered him to be brought to trial. After the indictment had been read, pardon was offered him, and favour, if he would lay aside what the Court called his obstinacy, and change his opinion. "Most noble lords," he replied, "I have great reason to return thanks to your honours, for this your great civility; but I beseech Almighty God that I may continue in the mind I am in, through his grace, unto death." Then answering to the charges against him, he said, that if he had not, as the King's counsellor, opposed the project of the second marriage, according to his conscience, . . . then, indeed, he might justly have been esteemed a most wicked subject, and a perfidious traitor to God. The offence, if offence it was, to deliver his mind freely, when the King had called for it, he thought had been sufficiently punished by the loss of his estate, and an imprisonment of fifteen months, which had impaired not his health only, but his memory and understanding also. Touching the second charge, that he had obstinately and traitorously refused, when twice examined, to tell his opinion, whether the King was supreme head of the Church or no; . . . "This," said he, "was then my answer, that I would think of nothing else hereafter, but of the passion of our blessed Saviour, and of my exit out of this miserable world. I would not transgress any law, nor become guilty of any treasonable crime; for the statute, nor no other law in the world, can punish any man for his silence, seeing they can do no more than punish words and deeds. God only is the judge of the secrets of our hearts." He protested that he had never revealed his opinion to any person; and to the charge of having encouraged Fisher in the like obstinacy, he said, that when that bishop desired to know how he had answered concerning the oath, his only reply was, that he had settled his conscience, and

advised him to satisfy his according to his own mind. A witness was brought against him, to whose testimony Sir Thomas objected, the man being a notorious liar; and was it to be believed, that he would communicate to such a fellow opinions which he deemed it necessary not to explain before the Council? Two persons were called upon to confirm this villain's evidence, and both declined doing it, saying, that being otherwise occupied at the time, they had given no ear to the discourse. Yet upon this evidence the jury found him guilty. . . . Such were juries in those days.

Sir Thomas then spoke resolutely out, and maintained that judgment ought not to be pronounced against him, because the Act, upon which the indictment was founded, was directly repugnant to the laws of God, and of the holy Church. This kingdom had no more right to make laws for the Church, of which it was but one member, than the City of London had for the kingdom. The Act was contrary to Magna Charta, by which the Church was secured in the possession of all its rights and liberties. It was contrary also to the coronation oath; and he could not think himself bound to conform his conscience to the counsel of one kingdom, against the general consent of Christendom. He concluded, in his natural mild temper, that as the Apostle Paul consented to the death of the protomartyr Stephen, and yet both were now saints in heaven, so he prayed that, though their lordships were now judges to his condemnation, they might meet hereafter joyfully in everlasting life. It is related of him, that he had been in the habit of tormenting his body by wearing sackcloth, and that after his condemnation he punished himself every night severely with a scourge, . . . so completely had he surrendered his better mind to the degrading superstitions of the Romish Church, if his biographers, who regarded him as a saint, are in this point to be credited. But this is certain, that his equanimity never forsook him; that, even on the scaffold, he found occasion for a jest, and that he laid his head upon the block with the cheerfulness of a man who, knowing that he had acted faithfully according to his conscience, was assured of his reward. Fisher was beheaded a few days before him. The execution of these eminent men, the one nearly fourscore, venerable also for his erudition and his virtues, . . . the other, the most distinguished ornament of his age and country, was regarded throughout Christendom with wonder and detestation. It was thought necessary, therefore, that a vindication of the King's conduct should be written, and the person by whom this

task was performed was Stephen Gardiner; . . . the task was worthy of the man. In both cases, the work of retribution may be acknowledged; as persecutors both sufferers had sinned, and both died as unjustly as they had brought others to death. The consideration is important in a Christian's views; but it affords no excuse, no palliation, for the crime.

The King's determination to have his supremacy acknowledged, was exasperated by opposition; and he would even have sent his daughter, the Lady Mary, to the Tower for her refusal, there to suffer as a subject, if Cranmer had not earnestly dissuaded him. To his entreaties he yielded; but, at the same time, warned the Archbishop, that this interference would one day prove his utter confusion. Cranmer could not have been blind to this danger; neither, when the worse consequences which might have been apprehended, came upon him at last, would he repent of having, in this instance, faithfully discharged his duty. If Henry had always listened to this faithful counsellor, the Reformation would have proceeded as temperately in all other respects as with regard to doctrine, and the reproach which was brought upon it by the destruction of the religious houses would have been averted. Tolerated upon their then present footing, those establishments could not be. . . They were the strongholds of Popery, the manufactories of Romish fraud, the nurseries of Romish superstition. If religion was to be cleared from the gross and impious fables with which it was well-nigh smothered; if the Manichean errors and practices which had corrupted it were to be rooted out; if the scandalous abuses connected with the belief of Purgatory were to be suppressed; if the idolatrous worship of saints and images was to be forbidden; if Christianity, and not Monks, was to be the religion of the land; . . . then was a radical change in the constitution of the monasteries necessary: . . . St Francis, St Dominic, and their fellows, must dislodge with all their trumpery, and the legendary give place to the Bible.

Therefore Cranmer advised the dissolution of the monasteries, as a measure indispensable for the stability of the Reformation; and that out of their revenues more bishoprics should be founded, so that, dioceses being reduced into less compass, every bishop might be able to fulfil the duties of his office. And to every Cathedral he would have annexed a college of students in divinity, and clergymen, from whom the diocese should be supplied.* More than this might justly have been desired. After

* Strype's Cranmer, 35.

a certain number of monasteries had been thus disposed of, others should have been preserved for those purposes of real and undeniable utility connected with their original institution; some, as establishments for single women, which public opinion had sanctified, and which the progress of society was rendering in every generation more and more needful; others, as seats of literature and of religious retirement. Reformed convents, in which the members were bound by no vow, and burthened with no superstitious observances, would have been a blessing to the country.

Cranmer's advice was taken, as to the dissolution; in other respects it was little regarded, though to him it is owing that anything was saved from the wreck. The overthrow of these houses had long been predicted, because of the evils inherent in their constitution; still more because of their wealth: . . . and though the danger had been staved off in Henry the Fifth's reign, even then a precedent had been given to his successors, by the suppression of such alien priories as were subservient to foreign abbeys. For this measure, however, there were just and unanswerable reasons of state. A more dangerous step was taken by Wolsey, in the plenitude of his power. He, with the King's approbation, procured Bulls from the Pope, for suppressing forty smaller monasteries, and endowing, with their possessions, the two colleges which it was his intention to found at Oxford, and at his birth-place, Ipswich.

The Observant Franciscans had incensed the King, by the part they had taken in the Kentish Nun's imposture, and by the boldness with which they inveighed against the divorce. From resentment, therefore, he suppressed that order of friars; and in this act cupidity could have had no share, for they had no lands, and their convents were given to the Augustinians. More serious measures were intended, when commissioners were appointed to visit the monasteries, and report concerning their state, their discipline, and their possessions. To obtain the latter for the King's use, was the real object; and in the former, they found as much pretext as the fiercest enemies of monachism could have desired. Wicliffe had lamented one crying evil, which has prevailed everywhere where monasteries have existed, . . . the practice of thrusting children into them, and compelling them to bind themselves by irrevocable vows, that the patrimony of the elder or favourite child might not be diminished by their portion. The visitors had authority to dispense with such vows; and many, when they knew this, fell on their knees before them,

and prayed to be delivered from their miserable imprisonment. In many of these petty communities, they found parties opposed to each other, captious opposition, vexatious tyranny, and cruel abuse of power, which dreaded no responsibility. Coining was detected in some houses; the blackest and foulest crimes in others. Many nunneries were in a scandalous state; and so little were the austere rules of their institute observed, that when the observance was insisted on by the visitors, the monks declared it was intolerable, and desired rather that their community might be suppressed than so reformed.

It was in the lesser monasteries that the worst abuses were found; probably because they served as places of degradation, to which the most refractory or vicious members were sent. This afforded a plea for suppressing them, and a bill was passed accordingly, for conferring upon the Crown all religious houses which were not able clearly to expend above £200 a-year. The Preamble stated, that when the congregation of monks, canons, or nuns, was under the number of twelve persons, carnal and abominable living was commonly used, to the waste of the property, the slander of religion, and the great infamy of the King and of the realm, if redress should not be had thereof. Their manner of life had, by cursed custom, become so inveterate, that no reformation was possible, except by utterly suppressing such houses, and distributing the members among the great monasteries, wherein religion was right well observed, but which were destitute of such full members as they ought to keep. In order, therefore, that the possessions of such small religious houses, instead of being spent, spoiled, and wasted for increase of sin, should be converted to better uses, and the unthrifty religious persons, so spending the same, be compelled to reform their lives, Parliament humbly desired the King would take all such monasteries to himself and his heirs for ever.

If the plea for this Act had not been undeniably notorious, the greater abbots, of whom six-and-twenty at that time voted in Parliament, would never have consented to it. Fair promises were held out, that all should be done to the pleasure of Almighty God, and for the honour of the realm; and equitable provisions were made (had they been observed) for the reservation of rents, services, corrodies, and pensions, the continual keeping up of house and household in the same precinct, by those to whom abbey lands should be passed, and for occupying the same extent of the demesne in tillage, the latter under a monthly penalty of ten marks. By this Act 375 convents were

dissolved ; in the diocese of Bangor not one was left standing. The King became possessed of about £10,000 in plate and moveables, and a clear yearly revenue of £30,000. Some 10,000 persons were cast upon the world ; the greater monasteries had no inclination to receive them, and it was at their choice to enter or not. The King cared not what became of them after he had given them a new gown and forty shillings ; many rejoiced in their liberty, and some, it is to be hoped, deserved it and enjoyed it ; but it cannot be doubted that the number of vagabonds was increased by this ejection, and that some gray hairs must have gone down in misery to the grave. The property was soon dispersed by grant, sale, and exchange. This is said to have been Cromwell's advice ; and it is a policy which has been followed in all revolutions.

Even before the Act had passed, some of the smaller houses were voluntarily surrendered to the King. The motive may have been a consciousness of crimes which stood in need of pardon ; an expectation of favour ; or, what is not less probable, the prevalence of the reformed opinions among the members ; for the convents produced many advocates for the Reformation, and some of its martyrs. Queen Catharine did not live to witness these proceedings, which would have grieved her more than her own injuries. She never laid down her royal title ; but maintained that her marriage was valid, and, therefore, indissoluble ; so in conscience she believed it to be, and persisted in asserting it, for her daughter's sake. It is remarkable that her affection for Henry continued to the last ; she called him, in her last letter, her dear lord and husband, forgave him all the unhappiness he had brought upon her, expressed a tender anxiety for his soul, and concluded by declaring, that her eyes desired him above all things. Shame may have prevented Henry from gratifying this desire ; of any better feeling he had now become incapable. The thorough hardness of his heart was shewn soon afterwards, when he declared his marriage with Anne Boleyn void, beheaded her upon a false and monstrous charge of adultery and incest, and married Jane Seymour the next day. This change produced no alteration in religious affairs, for the new Queen was of a family which favoured the Reformation, and shared largely in the plunder distributed under that name.

The Lower House of Convocation, in which the Romish party prevailed, presented a protestation at this time, against certain errors and abuses, as worthy of special reformation. The opinions of which they complained, sixty-seven in number, were chiefly

what are at this day the tenets of the Protestant Church, blended with which were what Fuller has well called, "rather expressions than opinions, and those probably worse spoken than meant, worse taken than spoken." In the Upper House, parties were equally divided ; there were, on both sides, men of great learning, ability, and address ; and the advantage which the Protestant bishops possessed in their cause was balanced by popular opinion on the side of their antagonists, . . . for the evils which Sir Thomas More had foreseen were beginning to be felt. After long consultation and debate, certain articles were at length set forth in the King's name, as Head of the Church of England ; it being, the Preamble stated, "among the chief cures appertaining to his princely office, diligently to provide that unity and concord in religious opinions should increase and go forward, and all occasion of dissent and discord, touching the same, be repressed and utterly extinguished." The articles were such as could satisfy neither party ; both having struggled to introduce their own opinions, and each with considerable success, though, on the whole, to the manifest advantage of the Reformers. The Bible and the three Creeds were made the standards of faith ; no mention being made of tradition, nor of the decrees of the Church. Three sacraments, . . . those of Baptism, Penance, and the Altar, were said to be necessary to salvation, . . . four being thus pretermitted : but the corporeal presence was declared, and the necessity of auricular confession. Images were allowed as useful, but they were not to be worshipped ; and saints might laudably be addressed as intercessors, though it was asserted that Christ is our only sufficient Mediator. The existing rites and ceremonies were to be retained, as good and laudable ; not as having power to remit sin, but as useful in stirring and lifting up our minds unto God, by whom only our sins can be forgiven. Lastly, prayers for the dead were advised as good and charitable ; though the question of Purgatory was said to be uncertain by Scripture, and the abuses which, under that belief, had arisen were to be put away.

At the same time, a number of holidays were abolished, more especially such as, falling in harvest, were deemed injurious. The discontent which these measures occasioned among those who were thoroughly attached to the faith of their forefathers, with all its corruptions, was fomented by certain of the clergy, and by those men who are ready for any desperate undertaking. They represented that four sacraments were now taken away, and the remaining three would not long be left ; that all God's

service was in danger of being destroyed ; and that, unless the King's evil counsellors, who had suppressed the religious houses, were put down, no man would be allowed to marry, or partake the sacraments, or eat meat, without first paying money to the King ; so that they would be brought under a worse bondage, and into a wickeder way of life, than the subjects of the very Turk. The Lincolnshire men rose in arms upon this quarrel ; and their insurrection assumed so serious an aspect, that Henry mustered an army, and hastened in person against them. His approach dismayed the leaders ; and the ignorant multitude, being deserted by those who had set them on, sent their complaints to the King, in the form of a petition, protesting withal that they never intended hurt toward his royal person. He returned an answer, in which he reasoned with them, at the same time that he asserted his authority, and sternly reproved their treason. He had never read or heard, he told them, that rude and ignorant common people were meet persons to discern and choose sufficient counsellors for a prince ; how presumptuous then were they, the rude commons of one shire, and that one of the most brute and beastly of the whole realm, thus to take upon them to rule their King ! The religious houses had not been suppressed by the act of evil counsellors, as they full falsely asserted ; but granted to him by all the nobles, spiritual and temporal, of the realm, and by all the Commons in the same, by Act of Parliament. No houses had been suppressed wherein God was well served ; but those in which most vice, mischief, and abomination of living were used, appearing by their own confession, subscribed with their own hands, at the time of their visitation ; and more than the Act needed had been suffered to stand, for which, if they amended not, there would be more to answer for than for the dissolution of the rest. Reminding them then of his authority and their duty, he required them to deliver up an hundred of their ringleaders to his justice, rather than adventure their own utter destruction. Terrified by this demand, every man endeavoured to shift for himself, and such of the leaders as could be apprehended were put to death.

The discontents assumed a more formidable aspect in the North. An hundred thousand men collected in Yorkshire ; they bore a crucifix on one side of their banner, and a chalice and wafer on the other : the men wore, as a cognizance, on their sleeves, the representation of the five wounds, with the name of our Lord ; and they called their march the Holy and Blessed Pilgrimage of Grace. Priests, bearing crosses, went before

them : and everywhere they replaced the monks and nuns in the suppressed monasteries. Men of family and influence were engaged in this rebellion, and some of the great abbots were afterwards attainted for secretly supplying them with money. Pomfret Castle was yielded to them by the Archbishop of York and Lord Darcy ; both were suspected of promoting the rebellion ; and both, at this time, being either really or apparently compelled, swore to the covenant of the insurgents. York and Hull were surrendered to them : Scarborough Castle was bravely defended by Sir Ralph Evers ; and Skipton by the Earl of Cumberland, though many of the gentry, whom he entertained at his own cost, deserted him. Encouraged by the rising in Yorkshire, the people rose also in Lancashire, Westmoreland, and the Bishopric of Durham. The rebellion became serious : the army from Lincolnshire could not be removed, lest the people there should assemble and march upon their rear, while the Yorkshire men met them in front. The Earl of Shrewsbury made head against the insurgents with what force he could collect ; not waiting for orders or authority, when his duty was so plain : for which the King properly appointed him to the command in chief, and sent him succour with all speed, under the Earls of Derby, Huntingdon, and Rutland, the Marquis of Exeter, and lastly, the Duke of Norfolk.

The leader of the insurgents was one Robert Aske, a gentleman of mean estate, but of such talents, that no enterprise of this nature seems ever to have been conducted with greater ability in any respect. One of the leaders under him assumed the title of Earl of Poverty. Their numbers and their order were such, that the King's Generals deemed it dangerous to attack them, lest, upon the slightest advantage which might be gained over the royal army, a general rebellion should break out. Norfolk advised that conditions should be offered : he was suspected of seeking to serve the Romish cause by this means ; and there is strong ground for believing this : nevertheless, his advice was good ; for the chance of battle would have been greatly in favour of the insurgents, whereas they were not so capable of keeping together, for want of regular supplies, as the King's troops ; and, at all events, it was better to proceed by conciliation than by force. A herald was sent to summon them to lay down their arms. Aske received him, sitting in state, with the Archbishop on one side, and Lord Darcy on the other ; and having inquired what he was charged to proclaim, would not allow him to publish it. Upon this, the King summoned

all the Nobles to meet him at Northampton, and the army advanced to Doncaster, to prevent the rebels from proceeding further to the south; they were now thirty thousand in number, the King's force only six thousand, . . . and in point of arms and discipline, there was little difference. The latter, however, had fortified the bridges; and the insurgents could not ford the Don, which was so seasonably rendered impassable by heavy rains, that the circumstance was represented as a direct interference of Providence. Time was thus gained for negotiation; and the knowledge that a negotiation was going on, introduced a fear among the insurgents, that their leaders would make terms for themselves, and leave them to shift as they could.

The articles which the insurgents demanded, were drawn up by the clergy among them: they required a general pardon, the establishment of Courts of Justice at York, to the end that no person north of Trent should be brought to London upon any law-suit, . . . the repeal of certain acts, the restoration of the Papal authority, of the Princess Mary to her right of succession, and of the suppressed convents; the removal of Cromwell and of the Chancellor; the punishment of the Lutherans, and also of two of the visitors for bribery and extortion. These demands being rejected, they prepared to enforce them by advancing; and Norfolk represented to the King that some concession ought to be made, for they were greatly superior to him in strength. He was authorised, therefore, to offer a general pardon, and promise that a Parliament should soon be called, in which their demands should be considered. A second rising of the river Don, which again prevented them from crossing it, intimidated them, as an interposition of Providence on the King's behalf; they gladly accepted these terms, and the pardon was signed, on condition that they submitted and returned to their obedience. A proclamation accompanied the pardon, in which the King justified the measures of his government, and expressed his wonder that they, who were but brutes, should think they could better judge than himself and his whole Council, who should be his counselors. Just complaints he was ready to hear and satisfy; but he would bear with no such interference. And he required them to revoke the oaths by which they had bound themselves to this rebellion, to swear obedience, to apprehend seditious persons, and remove the monks, nuns, and friars, whom they had re-established. He ordered them also to send Aske and Lord Darcy to Court. The latter was imprisoned; his case, indeed, was different from that of the insurgents. Aske was favourably re-

ceived ; but when an attempt was made to surprise Carlisle, and several partial insurrections broke out, he hastened again to bear part in what he deemed a religious cause ; and being made prisoner, was put to death. Lord Darcy was brought to trial, and, in his defence, accused Norfolk of having encouraged the rebels to persist in their demands. The Duke offered to prove his innocence by combat ; but Henry gave no ear to the accusation, and Darcy, whose former services were thought to deserve consideration, and whose great age excited compassion, was beheaded. Many suffered by martial law ; and some of the great abbots were attainted and executed for the part they had taken in abetting the insurrection.

This unsuccessful struggle hastened the dissolution of those monasteries which had hitherto been spared. It was pretended that, by this measure, the King and his successors would be so greatly enriched, that the people would never again be charged with taxes ; and that the revenue thus obtained, would suffice for supporting forty earls, sixty barons, three thousand knights, and forty thousand soldiers, with their captains ; for making better provision for the poor, and giving salaries to ministers who should go about and preach the Gospel. The manner in which many convents were surrendered, shews how weary the members were of their way of life ; some gave as a reason, their conviction that the ceremonies to which they were bound were superstitious and useless ; others confessed shame and repentance for the frauds which they had practised, and the vices in which they had indulged. But there were some cases in which the neighbourhood petitioned that a religious house might not be suppressed, and the visitors themselves represented it as a blessing to the country. Latimer, with his honest earnestness, entreated that two or three in every shire might be continued, not in monkery, he said, but as establishments for learned men, and such as would go about preaching and giving religious instruction to the people, and for the sake of hospitality. The University of Cambridge expressed their desire and hope that the monasteries, which had hitherto been, not merely unprofitable to religion, but even pernicious, might be converted into colleges for students and preachers.

The King's purpose was, to appropriate £18,000 a year, in Church lands, for the endowment of eighteen new bishoprics. The proportion would have been iniquitously small ; for the yearly revenues of which he thus became possessed, exceeded £130,000, . . . but a third part only of what he purposed was

performed. The rest of the property was squandered by prodigal grants among his rapacious favourites; by such sales or exchanges as were little less advantageous than grants to the favoured subject; and no trifling part the King gambled away, . . . setting, sometimes, an estate, and sometimes a peal of church bells upon a cast. The deeds by which lands were conveyed to a religious house, usually concluded with the solemn imprecation of a curse upon those persons who should either withhold or wrest them from the pious uses to which they were consecrated; that curse, the Abbey-lands were believed, and not by the Romanists alone, to carry with them; and it fell heavily upon many of those who partook most largely in the spoil. The feeling of the people, upon this subject, was a just and natural one. The first religious house which was demolished was that of Christ Church in London, which had been given to the Chancellor Sir Thomas Audley; and when he offered the materials of the priory, church, and steeple, to any who would take them down, no man would accept the* offer: . . . a fact most honourable to the Londoners.

This proper feeling soon yielded to cupidity, aided as that was by indignation at the enormities which the visitors brought to light, and the juggling tricks which were now exposed. The simplest persons perceived what frauds had been practised concerning relics, when more pieces of the true cross were produced than would have made a whole one; and so many teeth of Saint Apollonia, which were distributed as amulets against toothache, that they filled a tun. The abominable frauds of the Romish Church hastened its downfall now, more than they had promoted its rise. A vial was shewn at † Hales in Gloucestershire, as containing a portion of our blessed Saviour's blood, which suffered itself to be seen by no person in a state of mortal sin, but became visible when the penitent, by his offerings, had obtained forgiveness. It was now discovered, that this was performed by keeping blood, which was renewed every week, in a vial, one side of which was thick and opaque, the other transparent, and turning it by a secret hand, as the case required. A trick of the same kind, more skilfully executed, is still annually performed at Naples. There was a crucifix at Boxley, called the Rood ‡ of Grace, which was a favourite object of pilgrimage, because the image moved its head, hands, and feet, rolled its eyes, and made many other gestures, which were represented as miraculous, and

* Fuller, b. vi. Hist. of Abbeys, p. 307. † Ibid. p. 323. Burnet, i. p. 243. Ed. 1681.

‡ Fuller, b. vi. Hist. of Abbeys, p. 333.

believed to be so. The mechanism whereby all this was done was now exposed to the public, and the Bishop of Rochester, after preaching a sermon upon the occasion, broke the rood to pieces in their sight. Henry failed not to take advantage of the temper which such disclosures excited. Shrines and treasures, which it might otherwise have been dangerous to have invaded, were now thought rightfully to be seized, when they had been procured by such gross and palpable impositions. The gold from Becket's shrine alone filled two chests, which were a load for eight strong men. Becket was unsainted, as well as unshrined, by the King, who, taking up the cause of his ancestor, ordered his name to be struck out from the Kalendar, and his bones burnt. Another fraud was then discovered, . . . for the skull was found with the rest of the skeleton in his grave, though another had been produced, to work miracles, as his, in the church.

The Pope had long threatened to issue a Bull of Deposition, but had hitherto delayed it, because of the displeasure which he knew it would occasion in other sovereign princes. The manner in which Becket had been uncanonised put an end to this suspension, and the Bull was now fulminated, requiring the King and his accomplices to appear at Rome, and there give an account of their actions, on pain of excommunication and rebellion; otherwise the Pope deprived him of his crown, and them of their estates, and both of Christian burial. He interdicted the kingdom: absolved his subjects and their vassals from all oaths and obligations to him; declared him infamous; called upon all nobles and others in his dominions to take arms against him; and required all kings, princes, and military persons, in virtue of the obedience which they owed the Apostolic See, to make war against him, and make slaves of such of his subjects as they could seize. In his letters to the different potentates, which accompanied the Bull, he called Henry a heretic, a schismatic, a manifest adulterer, and public murderer; a rebel convicted of high treason against his lord the Pope, . . . and he offered his dominions to the King of Scotland, if he would go and take them.

But the throne of England was no longer to be shaken by such thunders. Even the Romish Bishops joined in the declaration which Henry set forth, that Christ had forbidden his Apostles or their successors to take to themselves the power of the sword, or the authority of kings; and that if the Bishop of Rome, or any other bishop, assumed any such power, he was a tyrant and usurper of other men's rights, and a subverter of the kingdom

of Christ. The prelates who were most devoted to the Papal cause, deemed it politic for that cause, rather to assent to the King's measures, than to oppose him; nor was there any one at this time who defended all his proceedings, even those which were least defensible, more obsequiously than Gardiner, who of all men was at heart most inimical to the Reformation. This man, of odious memory, is supposed to have been the natural son of a Bishop of Salisbury, who was brother to Edward the Fourth's Queen; by the half-blood he was, therefore, cousin to Henry's mother. His countenance indicated capacity of mind, and strength of character, but it was strongly marked also by craft and implacable severity; . . . deep dissembler as he was, nature had made his features incapable of dissimulation. The son and biographer of good John Fox has well described him as "a man whose abilities qualified him for any employment, but who alway, as he grew elder, grew worse: haughty and cruel in bearing those honours which his deserts had won; and in regaining any that he had lost, able to weary any man with submission and humility."

Gardiner understood the King's temper, and knew when it was necessary to yield to him, and by what means at other seasons he might be guided. The Reformation had been advancing rapidly. The translation of the Bible, which Tindal began, had been completed by Miles Coverdale; and the whole work having been printed on the Continent, at the cost of Richard Grafton and his friends, was licensed in England under the privy seal, and ordered to be provided in all parish churches, for the use of the parishioners; the price of the book to be borne half by them, and half by the incumbent. Another circumstance, not less favourable to the Reformers, was the birth of Prince Edward; their work they well knew would be undone if Mary should succeed to the throne. The birth of a son, therefore, who would be trained up in their principles, was of the utmost importance, though their joy was abated by the death of Queen Jane in childbed. The writers who supposed that, by blackening the character of Henry, they might injure the Protestant cause, represented her life as having been sacrificed to his desire of issue, affirming that, upon the alternative of losing wife or child, he commanded that the infant should be saved. This atrocious falsehood is disproved by authentic documents. While Henry continued attached to a wife, his attachment was strong, and he had not lived long enough with Jane Seymour to be weary of her. If, indeed, he ever felt a real affection for any of his wives,

if was for her ; and it was considered as a proof of his undissembled grief at her loss, that he continued two years a widower.

There are some grounds for believing that Gardiner had, at this time, reconciled himself to the Pope for the part which he had taken in subservience to his master. Henry valued his abilities for business, saw his meanness, and was not aware that he himself was sometimes influenced by the fawning subtlety which he despised. The word heretic carried with it an odious sound ; no man was willing to acknowledge the fatal name. The King, particularly, still proud of the title which he had gained by defending the faith, could not bear to be thought an upholder of heresy ; and Gardiner represented to him, that nothing could remove that imputation, and establish his reputation for orthodoxy so effectually, as to repress, by timely severity, the opinions of the Sacramentaries, . . . opinions which were gaining ground in England, though none of the reforming prelates had yet adopted them. An unhappy opportunity was soon afforded this evil counsellor for urging his advice with success.

There was a pupil of the martyr Bilney, John Lambert by name, who, treading faithfully in the steps of his master and friend, found it necessary to leave the kingdom ; and going to Antwerp, where he associated with Frith and Tindal, continued there for some time as chaplain to his countrymen, till, at Sir Thomas More's instigation, he was seized and brought to England, where he was required to answer, before Archbishop Warham, to five-and-forty articles, any one of which might have placed him at the mercy of his persecutors. The opportune death of Warham, and the change of measures which ensued upon the King's marriage with Anne Boleyn, saved him then from the stake ; and Lambert, laying aside his priesthood with the intention of marrying, employed himself in teaching Greek and Latin. He held the same opinions as Frith concerning Transubstantiation ; and hearing a certain Dr Taylor touch upon that subject in a sermon, went to him after the service in private, and proposed certain questions as to a person from whom he differed concerning that point, but agreed with him in all others. Taylor requested to have his arguments in writing, and Lambert readily complied, suspecting no danger where he had no reason to apprehend any. Without any evil intention, Taylor shewed the paper to Dr Barns, formerly Prior of the Augustines at Cambridge, and, like Lambert himself, one of Bilney's converts. Barns was at that time a zealous believer in the corporeal presence, for which reason, when he was a refugee, Tindal had cautioned

Frith to be cautious how he promulgated his opinions upon that point, for fear of provoking him. The story is an awful lesson for the intolerant. By the advice of Barns, who dreaded the opprobrium which Frith's opinions might bring upon the Reformation, Tailor* laid the paper before Cranmer, as containing heresy. In consequence, Lambert was brought into court; he appealed from the bishops to the King; and Henry, then under Gardiner's influence, took up the cause with a high hand, convoking all his nobles and prelates, without delay, to repair to London, and assist him against the heretics and heresies, upon which he would sit in judgment. The trial, if such it may be called, was held in Westminster Hall, the King's guards being that day clad all in white, and the cloth of state white also. Henry was judge as well as disputant; and when Lambert, having argued, till breath rather than reason failed him, against Cranmer and the other prelates, one after another, submitted himself to the King's mercy, that King, into whose heart mercy never entered, ordered Cromwell to pass sentence upon him as a heretic; and he was burnt to death, with circumstances of peculiar barbarity.

Cranmer has been hastily charged with acting against his own conscience in this horrible transaction. But Cranmer, at that time, believed the corporeal presence, and held also the atrocious opinion, that death by fire was the just and appropriate punishment for heresy. This plainly appeared afterwards, in a case wherein he was deeply criminal. In the present instance Gardiner was the instigator, and Cranmer was more culpable for listening to the first accusation, than for bearing a part in the subsequent proceedings, over which he had no control. He, and the bishops who acted with him, had offended Henry, by endeavouring to save the property of the religious houses from that utter waste to which they saw it destined. They were willing that he should resume whatever lands † had been granted to the suppressed convents by the Crown: but they strongly urged that the residue should be devoted to purposes of public utility, conformable to the pious intention with which it had been given to the Church. It was Cranmer's misfortune, that some of the clergy who co-operated with him, were deficient either in temper or discretion. Many of the inferior preachers were for hurrying forward to destroy, rather than to reform. The Bible itself gave occasion for evil; presumptuous and ignorant persons no sooner read, than they took upon them-

* Strype's Cranmer, p. 65.

† Ibid. p. 72.

selves to expound it: . . . they interrupted the Church service by thus holding forth; discussed points of Scripture in alehouses and taverns, quarrelled over them, and bandied about the reproachful appellations of Papist and heretic. Those insane opinions also were abroad which struck at the root of all authority, civil or ecclesiastical, and of all social order. These circumstances accorded well with Gardiner's views. A proclamation, which had then the force of law, was issued, forbidding all unlicensed persons to preach or teach the Bible, and announcing the King's purpose to extinguish all diversities of opinion by laws, which in the first draft of this paper were called terrible; but Henry with his own hand erased the word, and substituted good and just.

The Six Articles, which shortly afterwards were enacted, would have justified the original epithet. By these it was declared, that no substance of bread or wine remained after consecration; that communion in both kinds was not enjoined to all persons; that it was not lawful for priests to marry; that vows of chastity must be observed; that private masses were meet and good, and auricular confession necessary to salvation. To speak, preach, or write, against any of the last five, was made felony, without benefit of clergy; but they who offended against the first were to be burnt alive, and not even allowed to save their lives by abjuration. This Act was no sooner passed than Latimer and Shaxton resigned their bishoprics, and were both committed to prison. Cranmer argued against it in the house with great ability, and, by the King's desire, delivered in his reasons in writing, Cromwell telling him, that let him say or do what he would, the King would always take it well at his hands. There appears, indeed, to have been a sincerity in Henry's attachment to Cranmer, which he never felt for any other of his ministers, perhaps because no other ever so entirely deserved his good opinion. He knew that the Archbishop was privately married to Osiandër, the German reformer's niece; and on that account, when he formerly set forth a proclamation against priests' marriages, limited it to such as should marry thereafter, or kept their wives openly. Yielding now to the times, Cranmer deemed it best to send his wife into her own country, till circumstances might become more propitious; and this he had reason to expect, because he knew that the King was in himself inclined to permit* the marriage of the clergy, but had been dissuaded from it by those who represented it as an unpopular and offensive measure.

* Strype's Cranmer, p. 69.

So many hundred persons were thrown into prison upon the Six Articles, that Henry himself thought it better to grant a general pardon, than to proceed against them all; and this bloody Act slept, till his determination to put away Anne of Cleves, and marry Katharine Howard, drew on the fall of Cromwell, whom the Duke of Norfolk, uncle to the bride elect, hated mortally. He was accused of heresy and treason, for acts, some of which were done in pursuance of the King's instruction, and others of such a nature, that had they been really committed, they would have been sufficient proofs of insanity. And he was condemned by bill of attainder, an Act for thus depriving the innocent of all means of defence having recently been passed, with the consent of the judges, and with his full assent, if not by his active interference. Cromwell was the* first victim to this most iniquitous mode of procedure, and Cranmer was the only man virtuous enough to stand forward in his defence; he wrote to Henry in the fallen minister's behalf, telling him that he believed no King of England had ever so faithful and so attached a servant, and praying God to send one in his stead, who could and would serve him as well. Nothing could be more dangerous than thus to interfere between Henry and the object of his anger; . . . it proved unavailing; but if it excited a momentary displeasure against Cranmer, it confirmed the King in a just opinion of that Primate's integrity, for he lived, it is said, to repent that he had sacrificed a faithful and able minister, who, towards him at least, was innocent of all offence.

The Six Articles were now enforced with extreme severity; and Henry, as if to shew his impartiality while he executed as heretics the Reformers who went beyond the limits which he had laid down, put to death as traitors those Romanists who refused to acknowledge his supremacy. Papists and Protestants, coupled together, were drawn upon the same hurdle to Smithfield, the former (according to their own-writers) feeling it more intolerable than death, to be thus coupled with heretics, and dying under the hangman's hands in this uncharitable spirit; while the Protestants, amid the flames, were offering up prayers for those by whom they were condemned. Barnes was among those who suffered at this time; he died piously, magnanimously, triumphantly; and while he thus expiated the part which he had himself borne in persecution, seems not to have remembered it among the things for which he asked and expected forgiveness. Bonner, whom Cromwell and Cranmer had advanced to be

* Fuller's Church Hist. b. v. p. 234.

Bishop of London, believing him a friend to the Reformation, as he had pretended to be, displayed his real opinions now, and gave full scope to his inhuman disposition. He even brought a poor ignorant boy, scarcely fifteen years of age, to trial for heresy; the grand jury threw out the bill; Bonner sent them back again with threats, and compelled them to find it; and the boy, who would have said or done anything to obtain mercy, was burnt alive by this monster, who has left behind him the most execrable name in English history.

The Romanists had at this time great influence with the King, . . . not as Papists (for they dared not avow themselves such, and Bonner's oath of fidelity to the King, against the Pope, is still extant with his signature), but as believers in Transubstantiation. Even the discovery of Katharine Howard's loose life, and her consequent execution, did not weaken their party, as they had feared it would. After that event, the general permission of reading the Scriptures was revoked. Nobles or gentlemen might cause the Bible to be read to them, in or about their own houses, quietly. Every merchant, who was a householder, might read it; so also might noble and gentle women, but no persons under those degrees.

The King's marriage with Katharine Parr, widow of Lord Latimer, did not stop the persecution. But it was known that she favoured the Reformation, and Gardiner therefore regarded her as a person who was, if possible, to be removed. The common saying was, that he had bent his bow to shoot at some of the head deer, . . . meaning the Queen and Cranmer. Henry was now more easy to be worked on to such wicked purposes; the indulgence of cruelty and tyranny rendered him more cruel and tyrannical as he grew older. But as it would have been dangerous to begin abruptly with these personages, an attempt was made to involve the Queen in a charge of heresy upon the fatal point of the corporeal presence; and, upon that charge, Anne Askew, a lady who was admired at court for her acquirements, and talents, and beauty, and who was greatly in the Queen's favour, was selected as a victim, in the hope that she might also be made an accuser.

The father of this lady, Sir William Askew, of Kelsay in Lincolnshire, had contracted his eldest daughter to a rich heir, Kyme by name, in the same county. She died before the marriage was completed, and Sir William, unwilling to let slip an alliance which he deemed highly advantageous, compelled her sister Anne to marry him, strongly against her will. Some few

years afterwards, her husband turned her out of doors, because by a diligent perusal of the Scriptures she had become a Protestant : upon which she sought for a divorce, would on no conditions return to him again, and resumed her maiden name. A Papist, who laid in wait for her life, and watched her for that purpose, when he bore testimony against her, deposed that she was the devoutest woman he had ever known ; for she began to pray always at midnight, and continued for some hours in that exercise. As long as it was possible, she evaded, with a woman's wit, the insnaring questions which were proposed to her. One charge was, how she had said it was written in the Scriptures that God was not in temples made with hands : upon this she referred to the words of St Stephen and St Paul ; and being asked, how she explained these words, replied, with some scorn, that she would not throw pearls before swine, . . . acorns were good enough. The Lord Mayor, Sir Martin Bower, demanded of her, if she had said that priests could not make the body of Christ ; "I have read," she replied, "that God made man ; but that man can make God, I never yet read, nor, I suppose, ever shall." "Thou foolish woman," said the Lord Mayor, "is it not the Lord's body, after the words of consecration ?" She answered, that it was then consecrated or sacramental bread : and he said to her, "If a mouse eat the bread, after the consecration, what shall become of the mouse ; what sayest thou, foolish woman ?" She desired to know what he said to it himself ? and upon his affirming that the mouse was damned, could not refrain from smiling, and saying, "Alack, poor mouse !" A priest, who was sent to examine her in private, asked, in the same spirit, whether or not, if the host fell, and a beast ate it, the beast received his Maker ? She told him, as he had thought proper to ask the question, he might solve it himself ; she would not, because he was come to tempt her. Bonner sought to inveigle her, and urged her boldly to disclose the secrets of her heart, promising that no hurt should be done to her for anything which she might say under his roof. She replied, that she had nothing to disclose ; for, thanks to God, her conscience had nothing to burthen it. He observed, that no wise chirurgeon could minister help to a wound before he had seen it uncovered. To this "unsavoury similitude," as she termed it, Anne Askew replied, that her conscience was clear, and it would be much folly to lay a plaster to the whole skin. When he pressed her closely upon the fatal point, her answer was, that she believed as the Scripture taught her.

For this time she was admitted to bail ; but this was but the prelude to a dreadful tragedy. Being again apprehended, and brought before the Council, she seems to have perceived that her fate was determined, and to have acted with a temper ready for the worst. When Gardiner called her a parrot, she told him she was ready to suffer, not only his rebukes, but all that should follow, . . . yea, and gladly. He threatened her with burning. "I have searched all the Scriptures," she replied, "yet could I never find that either Christ or his Apostles put any creature to death." Upon a subsequent examination, at Guildhall, she answered openly to the deadly question, saying, that what they called their God was a piece of bread. "For proof thereof," said she, "make it when you list, let it but lie in the box three months, and it will be mouldy, and so turn to nothing that is good ; wherefore I am persuaded that it cannot be God." They then condemned her to the flames. She wrote to the King, and to the Chancellor Wriothesley, requesting him to present her paper, by which, she said, if it were truly conferred with the hard judgment passed upon her, his Grace would perceive that she had been weighed in uneven balances. The paper to the King contained these words : "I, Anne Askew, of good memory, although God hath given me the bread of adversity and the water of trouble, yet not so much as my sins have deserved, desire this to be known unto your Grace, that forasmuch as I am by the law condemned for an evil-doer, here I take Heaven and earth to record, that I shall die in my innocency. And according to that I have said first, and will say last, I utterly abhor and detest all heresies. And, as concerning the Supper of the Lord, I believe so much as Christ hath said therein, which he confirmed with his most blessed blood. I believe so much as he willed me to follow, and so much as the Catholic Church of him doth teach : for I will not forsake the commandment of his holy lips. But look, what God hath charged me with his mouth, that have I shut up in my heart. And thus briefly I end for lack of learning."

Henry's heart was naturally hard, and the age and the circumstances in which he was placed had steeled it against all compassion. Some displeasure, indeed, he manifested shortly afterwards, when the Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir Anthony Knevet, came to solicit pardon for having disobeyed the Chancellor, by refusing to let his gaoler stretch this lady on the rack a second time, after she had endured it once, without accusing any person of partaking her opinions. It was concerning the ladies of the

Court that she was thus put to the torture, in the hope of implicating the Queen; and when Knevet would do no more, the Chancellor Wriothsesley, and Rich, who was a creature of Bonner's, racked her with their own hands, throwing off their gowns that they might perform their devilish office the better. She bore it without uttering cry or groan, though immediately upon being loosed, she fainted. Henry readily forgave the lieutenant, and appeared ill pleased with his Chancellor: . . . but he suffered his wicked ministers to consummate their crime. A scaffold was erected in front of St Bartholomew's Church, where Wriothsesley, the Duke of Norfolk, and others of the King's Council, sate with the Lord Mayor, to witness the execution. Three others were to suffer with her for the same imagined offence; one was a tailor, another a priest, and the third a Nottinghamshire gentleman of the Lascelles family, and of the King's household. The execution was delayed till darkness closed, that it might appear the more dreadful. Anne Askew was brought in a chair, for they had racked her till she was unable to stand, and she was held up against the stake by the chain which fastened her; but her constancy and cheerful language of encouragement, wrought her companions in martyrdom to the same invincible fortitude and triumphant hope. After a sermon had been preached, the King's pardon was offered to her, if she would recant; refusing even to look upon it, she made answer, that she came not there to deny her Lord! The others, in like manner, refused to purchase their lives at such a price. The reeds were then set on fire: . . . it was in the month of June; . . . and at that moment a few drops of rain fell, and a thunder clap was heard, which those in the crowd who sympathised with the martyrs, felt as if it were God's own voice, accepting their sacrifice, and receiving their spirits into his everlasting rest.

Though the Popish party could not extort anything against the Queen in the course of their proceedings, they made it matter of accusation against her that Anne Askew had been her friend; and if she had not been apprised of her danger by a friendly intimation in good time, and with singular dexterity known how to avert it, she might probably have fallen a victim. Some remaining tenderness towards her in the King enabled her to recover her influence over him; and perhaps he felt in some degree dependent upon her, when his infirmities were now pressing upon him heavier than his age. The Romanists were not more successful in their attempt at the destruction of Cranmer. They represented to the King, that the Primate and

his learned men had so infected the whole realm with his unsound doctrine, that three parts of the nation were become abominable heretics, and England, in consequence, stood in danger of being convulsed by such commotions as had sprung up, from the same cause, in Germany. They desired, therefore, that he might be committed to the Tower, for, being of the Privy Council, unless he were in durance, no man would dare give evidence against him; but when he should be under arrest, they would be bold to tell the truth, and quiet their consciences. Henry objected to this course; at length, as if convinced by their representations, he gave them permission to summon the Archbishop before them on the morrow, and commit him, if they found cause.

Such, however, was his inward conviction of Cranmer's worth, that he, who, without remorse, had sent two wives to the scaffold, could not sleep upon this resolution; but a little before midnight, sent privately to Lambeth, and called him from his bed. The Archbishop immediately obeyed this untimely summons and hastened to Whitehall, where Henry told him what the Council had advised concerning him, and that he had granted their request; "but whether I have done well or no," he added, "what say you, my Lord?" Cranmer thanked him for giving him this warning beforehand, and said he was well content to be committed to the Tower for the trial of his doctrine, so he might be fairly heard, and not doubting that his Majesty would see him so to be used. Upon this, the King exclaimed,* "O Lord God! what fond simplicity have you, so to permit yourself to be imprisoned that every enemy may have you at advantage! Do not you know, that when they have you once in prison, three or four false knaves will soon be procured to witness against you, and condemn you, which else dare not open their lips, or appear before your face? No! not so, my Lord, I have better regard unto you, than to permit your enemies so to overthrow you!" It is less to Henry's honour, that in this instance he should have interfered to protect a faithful servant, than it is to his reproach, that understanding thus perfectly the villany of such proceedings, he should have availed himself of it in some cases, and permitted it in so many others. He then told the Archbishop, that when he appeared before the Council, he should require of them, as being one of their body, the same favour which they would have themselves—that is, to have his accusers brought before him. If they refused this, and were for com-

* Strype's Cranmer, p. 125.

mitting him forthwith, "then," said he, "appeal you from them to our person, and give to them this my ring, by which they shall understand, that I have taken your cause from them into my own hands."

Accordingly, Cranmer was summoned by eight o'clock on the following morning; and the Council, as if by that indecency they meant to give him a foretaste of what should follow, kept him standing nearly an hour at the Council-chamber door, among serving-men and lacqueys. This was reported to the King by a friend of the Archbishop's. "Have they served him so?" said Henry; "it is well; I shall talk with them by-and-by." At length Cranmer was called in, and informed, that, seeing he, and others by his permission, had infected the whole realm with heresy, it was the King's pleasure he should be committed to the Tower, and there examined for his trial. In vain did Cranmer solicit that, before they proceeded to any further extremity, his accusers might there be confronted with him. The Council acted as Henry had foreseen, and Cranmer then produced the ring. "I am sorry, my Lords," said he, "that you drive me to this exigent, to appeal from you to the King's Majesty, who, by this token, hath resumed this matter into his own hand, and dischargeth you thereof." There was no time for recovering from their astonishment and confusion: they were compelled, without delay, to go before the King, who received them sternly, as they had well deserved. "Ah, my Lords," said he, "I thought I had had a discreet and wise Council, but now I perceive that I am deceived. How have you handled here my Lord of Canterbury! What make ye of him?—a slave? shutting him out of the Council-chamber among serving-men! Would ye be so handled yourselves? I would you should well understand, that I account my Lord of Canterbury as faithful a man towards me, as ever was prelate in this realm, and one to whom I am many ways beholden, by the faith I owe unto God." He laid his hand upon his heart as he spake, and telling them, that they who loved him would upon that account regard the Archbishop, advised them to put away all malice against him, and made them, in his presence, submit to the forms of reconciliation. And from that time, as long as Henry lived, no man dared whisper against Cranmer.

But though the King used every means to confirm this reconciliation, and for that purpose frequently brought the Archbishop and his enemies together at his own table, he perceived how hollow it was on the part of the Romanists; and giving in

this a memorable instance of foresight, he altered the* three Cranes sable on a field argent, which were part of Cranmer's paternal arms, into three Pelicans, telling him, these birds should signify unto him, that he ought to be ready, like them, to shed his blood for his young ones, brought up in the faith of Christ; "for," said the King, "you are like to be tasted at length, if you stand to your tackling."

The Romanists would have induced the King to take further measures for counteracting the Reformation, had it not been for the just and sincere respect with which he regarded Cranmer. At this time, the evil of what had been done was verily more apparent than the good. Preaching was become much more frequent; but the preachers, instead of enforcing faith, hope, and charity, the consolations, the duties, and the rewards of Christianity, made the pulpit a place of controversy, filled their sermons with invectives, and contributed to exasperate the spirit of discord which was abroad. The Scriptures themselves were abused by both parties; the vain, the arrogant, and the contentious among the Reformers, studied them less for edification, than to seek for texts which might be uncharitably applied to their opponents, or to find matter for unprofitable and mischievous disputation. Because the Bible was in English, they believed that it was now made level to their capacities, and that in all parts and points they understood it. And the Romanists, in an opposite and not less reprehensible temper, took advantage of this abuse to derogate from the Bible itself, treated it with irreligious mockery, and made it matter of burlesque and sport in alehouses, as others, with little less irreverence, were making it matter of contention and anger. These abuses made the King once more prohibit the New Testament, and the books of Wicliffe, Frith, and other reformers.

The fall of the Howard family, and the dislike with which the King was beginning to regard Gardiner, would have been followed by measures favourable to the Reformation, if Henry's life had been prolonged. A treaty† with the King of France was actually on foot, for altering the Mass into a communion: their intention was to invite the Emperor to act with them, and Cranmer had been ordered to compose a form of service. But this was broken off by Henry's death. The Papists asserted, that even before his death, he was punished by the Almighty in body and in soul; that on his deathbed, he frequently, in a low and deadly voice, repeated the names of those religioners who

* Strype's Cranmer, p. 126.

† Ibid. p. 139.

had been put to death for denying his supremacy; . . . that he called for a Romish priest, but that those who surrounded him would not permit one to approach; that he died exclaiming, "all is lost!" and that when his body was opened, it was found to be a mass of diseased fat, absolutely without blood. The truth is, that when Henry knew himself to be dying, he chose from all his bishops and chaplains to have Cranmer with him at that needful time. He was speechless, but not senseless, when the Archbishop arrived; and being desired to give some token that he put his trust in God, through Jesus Christ, as Cranmer, at that awful hour, exhorted him, he pressed the Archbishop's hand earnestly, and presently expired.

He had revised his will a month before his death, in which, . . . affirming his belief, that every Christian, who endeavoured to execute in his lifetime, as he could, such good deeds and charitable works as Scripture commandeth, and died in stedfast faith, is ordained by Christ's passion to eternal life, . . . he declared that he verily trusted, by God's grace, to be one of that number. He expressed repentance for his old and detestable life, and in full intention of never returning to the like, humbly and heartily bequeathed his soul to Almighty God; and earnestly entreated the blessed Virgin, and all the holy company of heaven, to pray for him continually while he lived, and at his passing hour, that he might the sooner after his departure obtain that everlasting life, which he both hoped and claimed through Christ's passion. For his body, which, when the soul is departed, would return to the vile matter whereof it was made, were it not, he said, for the crown and dignity which God had called him to, and that he would not be counted an infringer of honest worldly policies and customs, when they be not contrary to God's law, he could be content to have it buried in any place accustomed for Christians, were it never so vile, for it was but ashes, and to ashes it must return. Nevertheless, because he would be loth in the reputation of the people to injure that dignity whereto he had unworthily been called, he desired it might be laid in the honourable tomb which he had ordered to be prepared, and which was already well onward: and thither he desired that the remains of his true and loving wife, Queen Jane, might also be removed; and a convenient altar set there, honourably furnished with all things requisite for daily masses, there to be said perpetually, while the world should endure. And he enjoined, that a thousand marks should be distributed, partly along the way which his funeral might travel, and part

at the place of burial, to the most poor and needy people that might be found (common beggars as much as might be avoided), thereby to move them, that they might pray heartily for the remission of his offences, and the health of his soul.

In this temper Henry VIII. departed, little expecting how odious many of his actions would appear to posterity, and perhaps not reckoning the worst of them among the things of which he repented. It is more remarkable, that so many revolting acts of caprice and cruelty did not deprive him of the affection of his subjects, but that he retained his popularity to the last. This could not have been, had he been the mere monster, which upon a cursory view of his history, he must needs appear to every young and ingenuous mind. Large allowances are to be made for an age, wherein the frequency of atrocious punishments had hardened the public character, and rendered all men (the very few excepted, who seem to be so constituted, that no circumstances can corrupt them) unfeeling to a degree, which happily we, in these days, are hardly capable of conceiving. Much must also be allowed for his situation. The person, whose moral nature is not injured by the possession of absolute power, must be even more elevated above his fellow-creatures in wisdom and in virtue, than in authority; and that Henry was, in fact, as absolute as any of the Cæsars, he knew, and none of his subjects would have disputed. If his heart had been open to any compunctious visitings, the ready assent with which the intimation of his will, in its worst purposes, was received by obsequious counsellors and servile parliaments, would have repressed them. Whatever was his pleasure, they pronounced to be just and lawful. When he sent a minister or a wife to the scaffold, with as little compassion as he would have shewn in ordering a dog to be drowned, he felt no weight upon his conscience, because the murder was performed with all the legality which could be given it by Acts of Parliament, formalities of law, and courts of justice!

The qualities which endeared him to his subjects were, probably, his lavish liberality, and that affability in his better moods which, in the great, has always the semblance, and frequently something of the reality, of goodness. He never raised any man to rank and power who was not worthy of elevation for his attainments and capacity, whatever he might be in other respects.* To be in Henry's service, and more especially to be in his con-

* It is both the safety and felicity of a prince, says South, to have a wise council; but it must be his own wisdom which provides him one.

fidence, was a sure proof of ability; and thus it was, that though he had some wicked counsellors, he never had a weak one. . . . Wolsey discovered no weakness, till his master's favour encouraged him to aspire at the Papacy, and then indeed ambition blinded him. He was the munificent patron of literature and the arts; and it is to the example which he set, of giving his daughters as well as his son a learned education, that England is indebted for the women and the men of the Elizabethan age.

With regard to the Church of England, its foundations rest upon the rock of Scripture, not upon the character of the King by whom they were laid. This, however, must be affirmed in justice to Henry, that mixed as the motives were which first induced him to disclaim the Pope's authority, in all the subsequent measures he acted sincerely, knowing the importance of the work in which he had engaged, and prosecuting it sedulously and conscientiously, even when most erroneous. That religion should have had so little influence upon his moral conduct will not appear strange, if we consider what the religion was wherein he was trained up; . . . nor if we look at the generality of men even now, under circumstances immeasurably more fortunate than those in which he was placed. Undeniable proofs remain of the learning, ability, and diligence with which he applied himself to the great business of weeding out superstition, and yet preserving what he believed to be the essentials of Christianity untouched. This praise (and it is no light one) is his due; and it is our part to be thankful to that all-ruling Providence, which rendered even his passions and his vices subservient to this important end.

CHAPTER XIII.

EDWARD VI.

EDWARD VI. was little more than nine years of age when he succeeded to the throne. The first six he had been bred up among the women, and afterwards Dr Cox and Sir John Cheke were appointed his preceptors, . . . names well known in the history of the Reformation and of literature. Abler tutors could not have been provided; they directed his education to the best objects, and the progress of their pupil corresponded to their desires; for, with his mother's gentleness and suavity of disposi-

tion, he inherited his father's capacity, and diligence, and love of learning. At his coronation, when the three swords, for the three kingdoms, were brought to be carried before him, he observed, that there was one yet wanting, and called for the Bible: "That," said he, "is the sword of the Spirit, and ought in all right to govern us, who use these for the people's safety, by God's appointment. Without that sword we are nothing; we can do nothing. From that we are what we are this day; . . . we receive whatsoever it is that we at this present do assume. Under that we ought to live, to fight, to govern the people, and to perform all our affairs. From that alone we obtain all power, virtue, grace, salvation, and whatsoever we have of divine strength." Child as he was, so well had he been trained, and so excellent was his moral and intellectual nature, that he was capable of thus thinking and thus expressing himself. One, who was about his person, says of him, "If ye knew the towardness of that young Prince, your hearts would melt to hear him named: . . . the beautifullest creature that liveth under the sun; the wittiest, the most amiable, . . . and the gentlest thing of all the world." "No pen," says Fuller, "passeth by him without praising him, though none praising him to his full deserts."

His uncle, Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, was appointed Governor of the King's person and Lord Protector, and forthwith created Duke of Somerset. The Reformation now proceeded without impediment; but plunder and havoc kept pace with it; for, by one of those unnatural leagues in which men, with the purest intentions, sometimes find themselves involved, the most religious members of the Church, and the veriest worldlings of the State, went hand in hand: the former, acquiescing in the evil which they could not prevent, for the sake of bringing about the good at which they aimed: the latter, promoting that good, because they made it subservient to their own selfish and rapacious ends.

Cranmer's disposition, as well as his principles, inclined him to proceed discreetly and with moderation, in the changes which were still necessary. The progress of his own mind had been slow; laying aside no received opinion, till he had thoroughly investigated the point, and ascertained, by painful and deliberate inquiry, that it rested upon no sufficient grounds of Scripture, and that the authority of the better ages was against it. It was not till the last year of King Henry's reign, that he gave up the tenet of Transubstantiation. His opinion had been shaken by the arguments and allegations of some persons, who were con-

vented before him for denying it. Frith's book confirmed the impression which had thus been made; and, finally, he became satisfied that the doctrine was as little scriptural as the term. Ridley, by the same course, came to the same conclusion; and Latimer, not long afterward, laid aside, in like manner, the last error of Popery which clung to him. These good men held the due mean, between that bigotry which allows not itself to question the grounds upon which any of its opinions are founded, and the levity which embraces new doctrines without consideration, and presently casts them off, as inconsiderately as it received them. Had the work of reform been conducted by the State as temperately as by the Church, it would have been, in all points, without reproach. But the religious and the statistic measures must not be confounded. Reformation was the aim and effect of the former; spoliation, of the latter.

The first ecclesiastical injunctions which were set forth, by the King's command, enjoined that the clergy should, once a quarter at least, dissuade the people from pilgrimages and image-worship; and that images, which had been abused with pilgrimages and offerings, should be destroyed. All shrines, with their coverings, tables, candlesticks, trindills or rolls of wax, pictures, and other monuments of feigned miracles, were to be taken away and destroyed, so that no memory of them should remain in walls or windows; and the people were to be exhorted to make the like clearance in their houses. Pulpits were to be provided. The Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Commandments, were to be recited by the Priest, from the pulpit, on holy-days, when there was no sermon; and no person, who could not recite them, should be admitted to the sacrament. No person might preach, unless he were licensed; and because of the lack of preachers, the curates were to read homilies, which should be set forth by the King's authority. A register was to be kept in every parish, for marriages, christenings, and burials. The fifth part of every benefice was to be expended on the mansion-house or chancel, till both should be in full repair; and for every hundred a year which a clergyman possessed, in church preferment, he should give a competent exhibition to a scholar at the University. Holy-days were to be kept holy; but it was declared lawful for the people to work upon them in time of harvest, and save that which God hath sent; scrupulosity, on such occasions, being pronounced sinful.

The people, in many places, had begun to demolish images, before these injunctions were issued: not that the majority

would willingly have parted with them; but that, when a few zealots began the work of demolition, enough were ready to assist, for the pleasure of havoc, even when there was no hope of plunder. The reformers held it unlawful to tolerate what they believed was prohibited by the Second Commandment. The late King* had maintained, against Cranmer, that that prohibition related to the Jews, and not to us: and Gardiner now argued, that pictures and images were as serviceable as books, and that devotional feelings might as lawfully and effectually be excited through the eye as through the ear. The contrary opinion prevailed, because frauds and superstitions had been so gross and palpable; and thus, as has too frequently happened, the use of what in itself might be good, was forbidden, because of the abuses to which it had given occasion.

The very circumstance of Henry's having ordered in his will perpetual masses for his soul, led to an inquiry whether such masses were not vain and superstitious, and therefore unlawful. The Romanists insisted that all things should be maintained in the state wherein the late King had left them (he having been not only the most learned prince in the world, but the most learned divine also), . . . at least till the present Sovereign should be of age. On the other hand, it was asserted, that at the time of his death he had been preparing to change the Mass into a communion, and that a matter wherein the salvation of souls was concerned ought not to be delayed. The Protestants were now a majority in the Government. An Act was passed, ordering that the sacrament should be administered in both kinds, conformably to our Saviour's institution, and the custom of the Church for the first five centuries. Private masses were put down, . . . one of the most lucrative practices of the Romish Church. The same Act appointed discretionary fine and imprisonment as the punishment of those who should treat the question of the sacrament with irreverence, either in sermons or in ribald treatises, with which the press now began to abound, both in prose and rhyme.

There was a great difficulty in finding persons who might safely be licensed to preach: the danger was not from the Papal clergy, but from those headstrong men who thought that all vestiges of Popery ought to be removed, and that the difference between the old and the reformed Church could never be made too wide. Admonition to such people was found useless, and no other means remained of stopping seditious preaching (for

* Strype's Cranmer, p. 136.

such it had become), than by forbidding any person whatever to preach, except such as were licensed by the King, the Protector, or the Primate, under their seals, . . . the bishops themselves being included in this prohibition. . . . But such sermons, addressing the vanity of the hearers, and encouraging their presumption, indisposed them for the homilies. They who had been thus flattered and appealed to, disrelished plain and wholesome instruction ; . . . and sometimes the congregation manifested their dislike, by talking while they were read ; sometimes the reader, by gabbling through the homily in such a manner, that those who were inclined to listen could not follow the hurried and contemptuous delivery.

When the new office for the communion was set forth, the point of confession was left free. Such as desired to make their confession to a priest, were admonished not to censure those who were satisfied by confessing to God, and the latter not to be offended with those who continued in the practice of auricular confession ; all being exhorted to keep the rule of charity, follow their own conscience, and not to judge others in things not appointed by Scripture. A Liturgy was prepared, with the same sound judgment which characterised all those measures wherein Cranmer had the lead. It was compiled from the different Romish offices used in this kingdom ; whatever was unexceptionable was retained, all that savoured of superstition was discarded ; the prayers to the saints were expunged, with all their lying legends ; and the people were provided with a Christian ritual in their own tongue. And so judiciously was this done, that while nothing which could offend the feelings of a reasonable Protestant was left, nothing was inserted which should prevent the most conscientious Romanist from joining in the service.

The Act which repealed all laws and canons that required the clergy to live in celibacy, was not less important. Strange as it may appear, nothing in the course of the Reformation gave so much offence to the Papists as the marriage of the clergy ; they looked upon the first race as perjured by it, and considered it always afterward as a desecration of the ministers of the altar. There is no topic to which Sir Thomas More, in his controversial writings, reverts so frequently, or treats with so much asperity. The inconveniences which have resulted are, that children are sometimes, upon the father's death, left destitute, often in distressful circumstances ; and that, among the higher clergy, wealth which might more fitly be appropriated to pious purposes, has sometimes been employed in aggrandising private families. But

the Popes themselves have so frequently made this use of their power, that a word has been formed to denote the propensity : and the former is part of a great and increasing evil, for which effectual remedies would soon be devised, if half as much zeal were exerted in removing the real evils of society, as is mischievously employed in combating imaginary grievances. One generation did not pass away, before it was seen that the Protestant clergy were not withheld, by their connubial and parental ties, from encountering martyrdom, when conscience required the sacrifice. And in our days, when Protestant missions have first been undertaken upon a great scale, and carried on with perseverance, it has been found that the wives of the missionaries have contributed their full share to the all but miraculous success which has been obtained in the South Sea Islands.

Gardiner and Bonner, refusing their consent to these momentous changes, were deprived of their sees (the former, after much tergiversation), and imprisoned, but no rigour was used toward them ; nor did the Protestants, in any instance, abuse their triumph by retaliating upon the Papists, for the persecution which they had endured. But hardly had they, as they deemed, secured their triumph, when an unhappy difference arose among them, concerning things in themselves indifferent. Hooper gave occasion to this dispute : having been obliged to fly the kingdom when the Six Articles were enforced, he brought back with him from Switzerland some Calvinistic prejudices ; and when he was now appointed to the Bishopric of Gloucester, refused to wear the Episcopal habit at his consecration. He is described as a man "of strong body, sound health, pregnant wit, and invincible patience : spare of diet, sparer of words, and sparest of time : harsh, rough, and unpleasant in behaviour, being grave with rigour, and severe with surliness." "Yet to speak truth," says Fuller,* the best-natured of historians himself, "all Hooper's ill nature consisted in other men's little acquaintance with him. Such as visited him once, condemned him of over-austerity ; who repaired to him twice, only suspected him of the same ; who conversed with him constantly, not only acquitted him of all morosity, but commended him for sweetness of manners." Dudley, then Earl of Warwick, afterwards Duke of Northumberland, was Hooper's patron, and wrote to Cranmer, requesting that he would bear with him in such reasonable things as he desired, and not charge him with the oath of canonical obedience, which was burdensome to his conscience ; and the King, under this

* B. vii. p. 402.

influence, discharged Cranmer from any danger of incurring a *Premunire*, by dispensing with the forms to which Hooper objected. But Cranmer knew that a mere letter from the King could be no protection against the law. Ridley, who had been appointed to Bonner's vacant see, was chosen to argue with Hooper, and convince him of the unreasonableness of such scruples; but he had taken up the notion, that whatever is not of faith, is sin; and their conference ended only in heating them both, and producing an ill-will of long continuance. Bucer and Peter Martyr, men who were both deservedly held in high estimation here, were applied to; and they, though agreeing with Hooper in wishing for the disuse of all such conformities with the Romish Church, saw, nevertheless, how desirable it was that nothing should be done unnecessarily to offend the Romanists, and urged him to compliance. They cautioned him also to take heed lest, by unseasonable and bitter sermons, he should prevent the great good which his preaching and teaching would otherwise effect. Instead of deferring to this wholesome advice, he appears to have provoked an order from the Privy Council, commanding him to keep his house, and as, during that restraint, he published his opinions, in a manner which tended to widen the difference, they committed him to Cranmer's custody, either there to be reformed, or further punished, as the case might require. Cranmer's report was, that he could not be brought to conformity, being inclined to prescribe laws, and not to obey them: upon which he was sent to the Fleet prison. Such measures would have provoked a stubborn heart; Hooper's was a sincere and noble one. Weighing the matter dispassionately, he perceived that he was wrong in his opposition; and having signified this, to the joy of the Protestant Church, abroad as well as at home, he was consecrated, and took possession of his diocese, there to discharge his arduous duties with exemplary zeal, and finally to close a holy and virtuous life by martyrdom.

The substitution of a table, in place of an altar, is ascribed to Hooper's influence. As a reason for assenting to it in his diocese, Ridley stated, that as one form was used in some churches, and the other in others, dissensions were thus occasioned among the unlearned; and therefore, wishing a godly unity to be observed, and because the form of a table might move the simple from the old superstitious opinions of the Popish Mass, he directed that the Lord's Board should be set up in that form, decently covered, in such place of the choir, or chancel, as the curates, churchwardens, and quest-men might think best; and all other side-

altars or tables to be removed. The people had been taught, by a Church book, called the Festival, which had been set forth in Henry the Seventh's time, and was hardly yet laid aside, that whatever needful and lawful things they might pray for on the day when they heard Mass, God would grant; that idle oaths and sins which they had forgotten to confess, were on that day forgiven them; they should neither lose their sight, nor die suddenly, on that day; and that the time which they employed in that holy service would not be carried to the sum appointed for their lives. It was most desirable that they should be undeceived from such superstition, and from the opinion that a real sacrifice was performed when the sacrament was administered; and it might be more difficult to effect this, while altars were considered as rendered sacred by the relics which they contained. And yet the reasons against such a change ought to have preponderated. An alteration, which was not essential upon the fundamental principles of the Protestant reform, tended to disgust the adherents of the Romish Church, who certainly were still the great majority of the people: it was more needful to conciliate them, than the zealots of the Reformation; and it was more practicable also, for concessions in such cases never fail to call forth further demands. They who abhorred the altar, were likely soon to treat the table with irreverence.

There was also the further evil, that fresh opportunity was given for sacrilegious pillage. "Private men's halls were now hung with altar-cloths; their tables and beds covered with copes, instead of carpets and coverlets." "It was a sorry house which had not somewhat of this furniture, though it were only a fair large cushion covered with such spoils, to adorn their windows, or make their chairs have something in them of a chair of state." Chalices were used for carousing cups at the tables of the bolder plunderers, and horses were watered in the stone and marble coffins of the dead; for never before, in any Christian country, had such demolition of churches been made. Three Episcopal houses, two churches, a chapel, a cloister, and a charnel-house were pulled down by Somerset, to clear the site for his palace, and supply materials for it. When the graves were opened, in this and other like works of sacrilegious indecency, many caskets full of indulgences were found, which had been laid in the* coffins with the dead. The bones were carried away by cart-loads, and buried in Bloomsbury. The good feelings of the country were shocked at such sights; and when he would in

* Strype's Memorials, ii. p. 293. Bagster's ed.

like manner have pulled down St Margaret's Church, the parishioners rose and drove away the workmen.

Somerset, if he had lived in happier times, was a man who might have left an unrepached and honourable name; his manners were affable, his disposition frank and generous. But his memory is deeply stained with the guilt of this execrable spoliation, in which no man partook more largely. He contributed, under cover of the Reformation, to bring into England the abuse of bestowing Church preferment upon laymen; a scandal from which, greatly as it prevailed abroad, this country had been remarkably free. We had had no secular abbots, who were complained of, in Spain, as the fretting worms of the Monastic orders; but Somerset, even before his nephew succeeded to the throne, had secured * to himself a deanery, the treasurership of a cathedral, and four of its best prebends; and charged a bishopric with the payment of £300 a-year to his son. Much of the remaining property of the Church was in like manner bestowed upon laymen, to the grievous discouragement of learning. Men, who were not authorised by his orders, were encouraged by his example, to appropriate the spoil of chapels and churches, which, if not willingly surrendered to them by the poor churchwardens, they extorted by threats, or took away by violence. Cranmer procured a letter from the Council, to stop this evil; but such prohibitions were of little avail, when the person of most authority in the Council was known to take for himself all that he could obtain. Nothing for which purchasers could be found, escaped the rapacity of these plunderers. Tombs were stripped of their monumental brasses; churches of their lead. Bells, to be cast into cannon, were exported in such quantities, that their further exportation was forbidden, lest metal for the same use should be wanting at home. Somerset pretended that one† bell in a steeple was sufficient for summoning the people to prayers; and the country was thus in danger of losing its best music, . . . a music, hallowed by all circumstances, . . . which, according equally with social exultation and with solitary pensiveness, though it falls upon many an unheeding ear, never fails to find some hearts which it exhilarates, and some which it softens.

One of the first Acts of Parliament, under the new reign, had been to confer upon the King all chantries, free chapels, and colleges. Under the first title, lands or houses were bequeathed to particular churches, for maintaining priests, who should daily

* Strype's Cranmer, p. 165.

† Ibid. p. 266.

perform mass for the souls of the founders, and other such persons as were specified in the deed of endowment. There were forty-seven such belonging to St Paul's. Free chapels were separate places of worship, erected and endowed for the same purpose. The surplus revenue, after the priest's salary was discharged, was appropriated to religious uses; either in supporting free schools, or scholars at the Universities, or in alms. Henry's executors brought in this Act: the Abbey lands had all been wasted, and without some such resource, they found themselves unable to pay his debts; and, what touched them more nearly, . . . to satisfy their own pretensions. It was opposed, not only by the Popish bishops, but by Cranmer. He was for reforming these foundations, but for preserving them till the King should come of age; not doubting, from his excellent disposition, but that he would then apply them to the best purpose, . . . that of improving the condition of the poor clergy. For the Reformation, or rather the spoliation which accompanied it, had miserably impoverished the inferior clergy, by transferring the impropriated tithes to lay hands. This argument was of no avail; and the Chantry lands went, . . . as the Abbey lands had gone before them.

They who divided the spoil were not content while anything remained untouched. Sir Philip Hoby recommended that all the prebends should be converted to the King's use: and the Protector's brother, the Lord Admiral, a bold bad man, represented that bishops ought not to be troubled with temporal concerns; and that it would be right to make them surrender all their royalties and temporalities to his Majesty, and receive an honest pension of money, yearly allowed to them, for hospitality. But he received for this a memorable rebuke. The King told him, that he knew his purpose: "You have had among you," said he, "the commodities of the Abbeys, which you have consumed, . . . some with superfluous apparel, some at dice and cards, and other ungracious rule. And now, you would have the bishops' lands and revenues to abuse likewise! Set your hearts at rest: there shall no such alteration be made while I live!"

The reckless destruction with which this violent transfer of property was accompanied, as it remains a lasting and ineffaceable reproach upon those who partook the plunder, or permitted it, so would it be a stain upon the national character, if men, when they break loose from restraint, were not everywhere the same. Who can call to mind, without grief and indignation,

how many magnificent edifices were overthrown in this undistinguishing havoc! . . . Malmsbury, Battle, Waltham, Malvern, Lantony, Rivaux, Fountains, Whalley, Kirkstall, Tintern, Tavistock, and so many others, the noblest works of architecture, and the most venerable monuments of antiquity, each the blessing of the surrounding country, and, collectively, the glory of the land! Glastonbury, which was the most venerable of all, even less for its undoubted age, than for the circumstances connected with its history, and which, in beauty and sublimity of structure, was equalled by few, surpassed by none, was converted by Somerset, after it had been stript and dilapidated, into a manufactory,* where refugee weavers, chiefly French and Walloons, were to set up their trade! He had obtained it from the Crown, by one of those exchanges, which were little less advantageous than a grant. One of the Popes, at King Edgar's desire, had taken this monastery "into the bosom of the Roman Church, and the protection of the holy Apostles," and denounced a perpetual curse upon any one who should usurp, diminish, or injure its possessions. The good old historian, William of Malmsbury, when he recorded this, observed, that the denunciation had always, till his time, been manifestly fulfilled, seeing no person had ever thus trespassed against it, without coming to disgrace by the judgment of God. By pious Protestants, as well as Papists, the Abbey lands were believed to carry with them the curse which their first donors imprecated upon all who should divert them from the purpose whereunto they were consecrated; and in no instance was this opinion more accredited than in that of the Protector Somerset.

The destruction of manuscripts was such, that Bale, who hated the monasteries, groaned over it as a shame and reproach to the nation. Addressing King Edward upon the subject, he says, "I judge this to be true, and utter it with heaviness, that neither the Britons under the Romans and Saxons, nor yet the English people under the Danes and Normans, had ever such damage of their learned monuments, as we have seen in our times. Our posterity may well curse this wicked fact of our age, this unreasonable spoil of England's most noble antiquities." "As brokers in Long Lane," says Fuller, "when they buy an old suit, buy the linings together with the outside; so it was conceived meet that such as purchased the buildings of monasteries, should in the same grant have the libraries (the stuffing thereof) conveyed unto them: and these ignorant owners, so long as

* Strype's *Cranmer*, p. 242.

they might keep a *Lieger-book* or *Terrier*, by direction thereof to find such straggling acres as belonged to them, they cared not to preserve any other monuments." They were sold to grocers and chandlers; whole ship-loads were sent abroad to the bookbinders, that the vellum or parchment might be cut up in their trade. Covers were torn off for their brass bosses and clasps; and their contents served the ignorant and careless for waste paper. In this manner, English history sustained irreparable losses, and it is more than probable that some of the works of the ancients perished in the indiscriminate and extensive destruction.

The persons into whose hands the Abbey lands had passed, used their new property as ill as they had acquired it. The tenants were compelled to surrender their writings, by which they held estates, for two or three lives, at an easy rent, payable chiefly in produce; the rents were trebled and quadrupled, and the fines raised even in more enormous proportion, . . . sometimes even twentyfold. Nothing of the considerate superintendence which the monks had exercised, . . . nothing of their liberal hospitality, was experienced from these *Step-Lords*, as Latimer, in his honest indignation, denominated them. The same spirit which converted Glastonbury into a woollen manufactory, depopulated whole domains for the purpose of converting them into sheep farms; the tenants being turned out to beg, or rob, or starve. To such an extent was this inhuman system carried, that a manifest decrease of population appeared in the Muster-books,* which in those ages answered, though imperfectly, the purpose of a *census*. The most forward of the Reformers did their duty manfully, in crying aloud against this iniquity; and truths of this nature were never proclaimed more honestly than they were from the pulpit in the presence of King Edward, and of the very statesmen who were most deeply implicated in the offence.

Such oppressions drove men to despair, and produced insurrections, which, by those who looked far off for causes that lay close at hand, were imputed to the Sun in Cancer, and the Midsummer Moon. The first rising was in Devonshire. It broke out in a village, on the day when the new Liturgy was first to have been used: a tailor and a common labourer declared, for the parishioners, that they would keep the old religion as their forefathers had done: the Priest, whether willingly or not, performed Mass, in obedience to their demand; and owing to the indecision of the nearest magistrates, who, when they ought to have restored

* Strype's Memorials, ii. p. 152. Bagster's edition.

order by a prompt exertion of authority, parleyed, hesitated, and did nothing, the news ran from one place to another, and the country was presently in a state of rebellion. The poor simple people, goaded as well as guided by priests of the old religion, who were as bigoted as themselves, and little better informed, put forth their demands in fifteen articles, wherein, so curiously were they misled, not one real grievance was stated. They required that all the General Councils and decrees should be observed, and all who gainsayed them be held as heretics; that the Six Articles should be enforced; Mass performed in Latin, as formerly, and no person to communicate with the priest; the sacrament to be hung over the high altar, and there worshipped, as in old time, and all who would not consent to this to be put to death like heretics; the laity to communicate only at Easter, and then but in one kind; baptism to be administered on week-days as well as holy-days; images set up again, and old ceremonies restored; the new service to be suppressed, because it was but like a Christmas game, and the old Latin service resumed, . . . the Cornish men, they said, utterly refusing to use English, because some of them understood not the English tongue; the souls in Purgatory to be prayed for by every preacher in his sermon; the English Bible to be prohibited, and all English books of Scripture, for otherwise the clergy would not "of long time confound the heretics;" and half the Abbey and Chantry lands applied to pious purposes. The other demands were, that Cardinal Pole should be pardoned, sent for from Rome, and promoted to be of the King's Council; that two clergymen, whom they named, should be beneficed, and sent to preach among them; that their leaders, Humphrey Arundel and the Mayor of Bodmin, should have a safe-conduct for the purpose of conferring with the King concerning the special grievances of their part of the country; and that no gentleman should have more than one servant, unless his landed estates enabled him to spend an hundred marks a year; for every hundred, they thought it reasonable he should have a man. They concluded with a protestation of loyalty: "We pray God save King Edward, for we be his, both body and goods."

The gentlemen of the country not being able to make head against the insurgents, Sir John Russell, Lord Grey of Wilton, and Sir William Herbert, were sent with a force both of horse and foot, among whom were many foreigners,—Burgundian, Italian, and Albanian; these troops having been brought over,* because

* Burnet, iii. p. 190.

the majority of the nation were attached to the old faith. The King, as his father had done under like circumstances, published an address to the deluded people, reasoning with them upon their propositions, and the grounds of their rebellion. With regard to baptism, he said, they might reasonably be offended, if by his laws they might not christen their children when they were disposed, upon necessity, any day or hour in the week ; but they were falsely deceived in this, as they might see by looking in the book of the new service. They were deceived, also, concerning that service, which, though represented to them as new, was, indeed, none other but the old, the self-same in English as in Latin, "saving a few things taken out, so fond, that it had been a shame to have heard them in English. The difference is, that we meant you our subjects should understand, in our natural country tongue, that which was heretofore spoken in Latin. How can this with reason offend any reasonable man ? If the service were good in Latin, it remaineth good in English : for nothing is altered, but to speak with knowledge, what before was spoken with ignorance ; and to let you understand what is said for you, to the intent you may further it with your own devotion ; an alteration to the better, except knowledge be worse than ignorance." Touching the Six Articles, he said, "Know ye what ye require ? or know ye what ease ye have with the loss of them ? They were laws made, but quickly repented. Too bloody they were to be borne of our people ; yet at the first, indeed, made of some necessity. O subjects, how are ye trapped by evil persons ! We, of pity, because they were bloody, took them away ; and you now, of ignorance, will ask them again ! . . . Since our mercy moved us to write our laws with milk and equity, how are ye blinded to ask them in blood !" Cranmer also wrote a calm and able answer to the Fifteen Articles, addressing it to the "ignorant men of Devonshire and Cornwall, who asked," he said, "they knew not what." He informed them what the decrees were which they wished to be observed. He pointed out the inconsistency of objecting to the English service, because some of the Cornish people spoke no English ; and demanding, therefore, a Latin service, which none of them understood. And with regard to the sumptuary law which they purposed, he explained its absurdity and its object : its absurdity was, that, under its operation, the gentry, instead of expending their incomes hospitably, and to the general good, must, of necessity, lay up in their coffers at least the one half ; but the intent was, to diminish their strength, and bring them under the command of the commonalty.

The kingdom was indeed, at that time, in danger of such a war as had raged in Germany. The landed proprietors had wickedly abused their power; it seemed almost as if they were attempting to bring their tenantry into a state of vassalage, as abject as any that existed on the Continent. On the other hand, principles which tended to the overthrow of all order were proclaimed, and prophecies (the common artifice of the middle ages) circulated in their aid, that soon there should be no king in England: that the nobles and gentry should be destroyed; and the commons, beginning at the South and North Seas, and holding a Parliament in commotion, should elect four governors to rule the realm. The avowal of such intentions changed the character of the contest: it lay no longer between the adherents of the old religion and of the new; but between men who fought for plunder, and those whose property was at stake. The insurgents laid siege to Exeter; the majority of the citizens were Papists; but the premature boast, that silks and velvets were to be measured by the bow, and horses sent home laden with plate, money, and goods, made them join resolutely in the defence. It was protracted till Lord Russell, by help of the merchants, was enabled to raise and equip a force sufficient for meeting the insurgents; who were finally dispersed, with the loss of some 4000 killed.

Had it not been for the levelling principles which the insurgents proclaimed, this insurrection might most seriously have endangered the Government; for the peasantry had been iniquitously oppressed, discontent prevailed over the whole country, and the Reformation was odious to the great body of the people, both from their religious persuasions, and from a belief that it was the cause of all the evils to which it had afforded occasion. The King was at war both with Scotland and France; and insurrections in Norfolk and in the North followed close upon that in the West. There was more difficulty in suppressing the former, because some of the townspeople in Norwich admitted the rebels, and took part with them; but they were finally defeated, and punished with sufficient severity. It is to the honour of the Earl of Warwick, of whom little good is recorded, that when the higher orders, who had suffered cruelly during the insurrection, called for further executions, he resisted their desire of vengeance, and would allow none to be put to death who had accepted the mercy which he promised them in the King's name.

The rise of Warwick, then made Duke of Northumberland, upon the overthrow of the Protector Somerset, produced no

change in the system of government concerning religion. That was a subject upon which Northumberland neither thought nor cared. He encouraged a set of profligate followers of the Court to scoff at religion, and make sacred things the object of their buffoonery; and he appropriated to himself or his favourites what had hitherto escaped plunder, without any of the forms which Somerset, and even Henry, had thought necessary. Cranmer and Ridley incurred his displeasure for resisting this; even their remonstrances, which were delivered always mildly and discreetly, as well as faithfully, could not be borne without resentment; much less, the bitter and indignant language of Latimer, Lever, Bradford, and John Knox, who was then exercising in England those talents by which he afterwards violently overthrew the Romish establishment in his own country.

If the conduct of those statesmen, who made use of the Reformation to aggrandize and enrich themselves, excited grief in all who sincerely desired the advancement of religion; the discretion with which Cranmer and his colleagues proceeded, in all their measures, obtained the full approbation of the foreign Protestants. Calvin himself, in accord with Bullinger, and those other divines by whom the Reformed Churches were governed, devised a plan for bringing those Churches to a conformity with that of England; restoring Episcopacy for that purpose, and uniting them in one body, under the King of England as their Defender. It has been asserted, that, in consequence of the alarm which the Papal Court conceived at this project, emissaries were sent, by its agents at the Council of Trent, to England, for the purpose of propagating the wildest and most dangerous opinions, thus to divide the Church of England, and bring disgrace upon it: and that the actors in this stratagem might play their part in safety, two Catholic Bishops, of whom Gardiner was one, were apprized of the scheme, that they might protect them in case of need. Similar stratagems have often been supposed, and strong evidence sometimes adduced to prove that they have actually been practised; yet in most cases they may reasonably be doubted, because in every case they have been unnecessary; nor was the Roman Court so inexpert, or so little acquainted with human nature, that it should exert itself to bring about, by politic arts, what rashness and enthusiasm would too certainly do without its interference.

The inhuman execution of many Dutch and German Anabaptists, in the preceding reign, seems to have deterred others from following them. But opinions of the same character and of

home growth, were disseminated in discourse, and even by the press ; such as that the elect had a right to take whatever their necessities required ; and that though the outward man might sin, the inward remained impeccable. Several persons recanted these doctrines, and bore faggots, . . . for no voice had yet been raised against the atrocious persuasion that death was the just punishment for heresy, and burning the appropriate mode of execution. There were some also who abjured Arian and Socinian opinions ; but for the former, a Dutchman suffered at the stake. There was one more remarkable victim during this reign, Joan Bocher, 'a Kentish woman, of good education, and therefore of good birth, and of respectable rank in life, for she had frequented the Court, and had been intimate with Anne Askew. In an evil hour was she accused of maintaining a fantastic and long-forgotten notion concerning our Saviour, that, though born of the Virgin, he partook of humanity only in appearance, having but an apparent, and not a real body. And for this she was condemned to die ! "It is a goodly matter to consider your ignorance !" said the undaunted woman, to those who sate in judgment on her. "Not long ago you burnt Anne Askew for a piece of bread, and yet came yourselves soon after to believe and profess the same doctrine for which you burnt her ! And now, forsooth, you will needs burn me for a piece of flesh, . . . and in the end you will come to believe this also, when ye have read the Scriptures and understand them !" This was a speech which, notwithstanding the error it contained, ought to have stricken Cranmer with compunction. When it was found that no reasoning could shake her confidence in this groundless opinion, the Council called upon Cranmer to obtain a warrant for her execution. It is the saddest passage in Cranmer's life ; . . . the only one for which no palliation can be offered, . . . for if he had not assented to it, and even constrained the young King to sign the fatal order, this crime might have been averted. There is not a more painful and humiliating circumstance in our history. Edward had been blessed with a tender heart, and the tendency of his education had been to cultivate the best feelings, and strengthen them by the purest principles. This act, which he was called upon to sanction by his warrant, appeared to his uncorrupted judgment in its true light ; and it was not without remonstrance and tears that, in deference to Cranmer's character and station, he signed the warrant, telling him, *he* must answer for it before God ! Edward had not then completed his fourteenth year, and yet

so much did he excel the best and wisest of his counsellors in the wisdom of the heart.

There is another beautiful anecdote of this excellent Prince, who, of all men that history has recorded, seems, in moral feeling, to have advanced the furthest beyond his age. Ridley had preached before him, and, with that faithfulness which his preachers were encouraged to use, dwelt upon the pitiable condition of the poor, and the duty of those who were in authority to provide effectual means for their relief. As soon as the service was over, the King sent him a message, desiring him not to depart till he had spoken with him; and calling for him into a gallery where no other person was present, made him there sit down, and be covered, and gave him hearty thanks for his sermon and his exhortation concerning the poor. "My Lord," said he, "ye willed such as are in authority to be careful thereof, and to devise some good order for their relief; wherein I think you mean me, for I am in highest place, and therefore am the first that must make answer unto God for my negligence, if I should not be careful therein." Declaring then that he was before all things most willing to travail that way, he asked Ridley to direct him as to what measures might best be taken. Ridley, though well acquainted with the King's virtuous disposition, was nevertheless surprised, as well as affected, by the earnestness and sincere desire of doing his duty, which he now expressed. He advised him to direct letters to the Lord Mayor, requiring him, with such assistants as he should think meet, to consult upon the matter. Edward would not let him depart till the letter was written, and then charged him to deliver it himself, and signify his special request and express commandment, that no time might be lost in proposing what was convenient, and apprizing him of their proceedings. The work was zealously undertaken, Ridley himself engaging in it; and the result was, that, by their advice, he founded Christ's Hospital, for the education of poor children; St Thomas's and St Bartholomew's, for the relief of the sick; and Bridewell, for the correction and amendment of the vagabond and lewd; provision also being made, that the decayed housekeeper should receive weekly parochial relief. The King endowed these hospitals, and moreover granted a license, that they might take in mortmain lands, to the yearly value of 4000 marks, fixing that sum himself, and inserting it with his own hand when he signed the patent, at a time when he had scarcely strength to guide the pen. "Lord God," said he, "I yield thee most hearty thanks that thou hast given me life thus

long, to finish this work to the glory of thy name!" That innocent and most exemplary life was drawing rapidly to its close, and in a few days he rendered up his spirit to his Creator, praying God to defend the realm from Papistry.

CHAPTER XIV.

QUEEN MARY—THE PERSECUTION.

AN attempt was made, by authority of King Edward's will, to set aside both his sisters from the succession, and raise Lady Jane Grey to the throne, who had lately been married to one of Northumberland's sons. This was Northumberland's doing; he was actuated by ambition, and the other members of the Government assented to it, believing, like the late young King, that it was necessary for the preservation of the Protestant faith. Cranmer opposed the measure, but yielded when the dying Edward told him he hoped he alone would not stand out, and be more repugnant to his will than all the rest of the Council were. Henry VIII. had been so accustomed to have laws enacted at his pleasure, that he seems at last to have considered his pleasure equivalent to law; and had accordingly disposed of the succession at different times, and finally by his last testament. His conduct served as a precedent for his son. But the principles of succession were in fact well ascertained at that time, and, what was of more consequence, they were established in public opinion. Nor could the intended change be supported on the ground of religion, for popular feeling was decidedly against the Reformation. Queen Mary obtained possession of her rightful throne, without the loss of a single life, so completely did the nation acknowledge her claim; and an after insurrection, rashly planned, and worse conducted, served only to hasten the destruction of the Lady Jane and her husband. Their tragedy may well be omitted here, as belonging rather to civil than ecclesiastical history, . . . which, during this for ever execrable reign, has too many of its own. Yet of the Lady Jane it may be said, that, being in all respects worthy of an earthly crown, it almost seems as if she had been summoned in mercy to a heavenly one, lest the world should stain a spirit which no circumstances could render more fit for heaven.

The Suffolk men were the first who had declared for Queen Mary; the Protestant faith had taken root among them, and they obtained a promise from her, that no alteration should be made in the religion which her brother had established. But if any person may be excused for hating the Reformation, it was Mary. She regarded it as having arisen in this country from her mother's wrongs, as having aggravated those wrongs, and enabled the King to complete an iniquitous and cruel divorce. It had exposed her to inconvenience, and even danger, under her father's reign; to vexation and restraint under her brother's; and after having been bastardised in consequence of it, and again restored to her rights, when she ought to have succeeded peaceably to the throne, an attempt had been made to deprive her of the inheritance, because she continued to profess the Roman Catholic faith. Her understanding was good, and had been cultivated most carefully: she was a religious woman, according to the faith which she had imbibed; she had inherited something of her mother's constitutional melancholy, something of her father's immitigable disposition; and as the circumstances of her life hitherto had tended to foster the former propensity, those in which she now found herself were not likely to correct the latter. Had the religion of the country been settled, she might have proved a good and beneficent, as well as conscientious, queen. But she delivered her conscience to the direction of cruel men; and believing it her duty to act up to the worst principles of a persecuting Church, boasted that she was a virgin sent by God to ride and tame the people of England.*

Had there been any moderation in her councils, the object of restoring Popery might have been accomplished; . . . it was even called for by the general voice, so indignant was the nation at the havoc which had been committed, and now so sensible of the mischief which had been done. The people did not wait till the laws of King Edward were repealed; the Romish doctrines were preached, and in some places the Romish clergy took possession of the churches, turned out the incumbents, and performed Mass in jubilant anticipation of their approaching triumph. What course the new Queen would pursue, had never been doubtful; and as one of her first acts had been to make Gardiner Chancellor, it was evident that a fiery persecution was at hand. Many who were obnoxious withdrew in time, some into Scotland, and more into Switzerland, and the Protestant parts of Germany. Cranmer advised others to fly; but when his friends entreated

* Strype's Cranmer, p. 309. Hale's Oration quoted.

him to preserve himself by the like precaution, he replied, that it was not fitting for him to desert his post.* So constant, indeed, were those Protestant clergy who remained, with the determination of bearing their testimony to the last, that when Wyatt, in his insurrection, sent to the Marshalsea prison, to set the gates open, and ask these confessors to join him, and assist him with their counsel, their answer was, that they had been committed there by order, and would not leave the prison, unless they were in like manner discharged. Some outrages were committed by insensate zealots; a dagger was thrown at one priest, a shot fired at another. And an attempt was made to perform a miracle, after the Romish manner, by delivering speeches against the Queen's intended marriage with Philip of Spain, and the restoration of Popery, . . . as if they had been uttered by a spirit in the wall. It was easily detected, and the girl, who had played the invisible angel, was brought upon a scaffold at St Paul's Cross, and made to confess the imposture. But the conduct of the Protestants, as a body, was worthy of their cause.

The Queen at first inhibited all preaching or printing upon religious subjects; she could not, she said, hide that religion which God and the world knew she had ever from her infancy professed, and she much desired and would be glad the same were of all her subjects quietly and charitably embraced. Yet, of her most gracious disposition and clemency, she intended not to compel any of them thereunto, until such time as further order, by common consent, might be taken therein; and she commanded them, meantime, to live together in Christian charity, and abstain from the new-found devilish terms of Papist or Heretic, and such like. In the same deceitful spirit, Cardinal Pole, when he arrived as Legate, protested that his commission was not to prejudice any person, for he came to reconcile, and not to condemn; not to compel, but to call again; he came not to call in question anything already done, but his commission was of grace and clemency to all such as would receive it; "for touching all matters past and done, they should be cast into the sea of forgetfulness." The fears of that class of men whose opposition was most to be dreaded, because it proceeded from worldly motives, were indeed quieted by a Bull, which allowed the holders of Abbey lands to retain their ill-gotten possessions. And it should not be forgotten, in honour to this Queen, of whom so much evil is recorded, that she voluntarily restored

* Strype's Crammer, p. 314.

to the Church all such lands as had been vested in the Crown, and had not yet been squandered.

The Protestant bishops were soon dispossessed of their sees; the marriages which the clergy and religioners had contracted, were declared unlawful, and their children bastardised. The heads of the Reformed clergy, having been brought forth to hold disputations for the purpose rather of intimidating than of convincing them, had been committed to different prisons, and after these preparatories the fiery process began. John Rogers, the protomartyr in the Marian persecution, and at that time a prebendary of St Paul's, had formerly been chaplain to the English merchants at Antwerp, and had there been a fellow-labourer with Tindal and Coverdale, in the great work of translating the Bible. He had a large family, and having married a German woman, might have found means to support them in her country; but deeming it the duty of himself and his brethren, he said, to stand like true soldiers by the Captain of their salvation, and not traitorously run out of His tents, or out of the plain field from Him, in the most jeopardy of the battle, . . . he chose to abide the worst; and in his last sermon at St Paul's Cross, exhorted the people to remain in such true doctrine as had been taught in King Edward's day, and to beware of all pestilent Popery, idolatry, and superstition. After long imprisonment and several examinations, he was condemned for maintaining that the Church of Rome was the Church of Antichrist, and for denying Transubstantiation. The sentence being passed, he requested that his poor wife, being a foreigner, might come and speak with him as long as he lived; "for she hath ten children," said he, "that are hers and mine, and somewhat I would counsel her what were best for her to do." But Gardiner, with his characteristic brutality, refused this, affirming that she was not his wife. And when, on the day of his execution, he asked Bonner that he might speak to her a few words only, before his burning, that monster would not permit it. She met him, however, with her ten children, one hanging on the breast, as he went to Smithfield. That sight did not abate the cheerfulness of his courage; a pardon was offered him at the stake, if he would recant; he steadily refused it, and washing his hands in the flames as they blazed about him, took his death with so calm and resolute a patience, that many who were present blessed God for the support which had been vouchsafed him, and derived strength from his example.

The second martyr, Laurence Saunders, had been educated

first at Eton, afterwards at King's College; but when he had continued at Cambridge three years, his mother, who was left a widow in good circumstances, meaning "to set him up wealthily" (and perceiving, perhaps, how dangerous the path of letters had become), called him from his studies, and apprenticed him to Sir William Chester, who happened to be Sheriff of London at the time of his martyrdom. Sir William was a good and liberal man, and perceiving that the youth was made unhappy by his change of life, gave up his indentures, and prevailed upon the mother to let him return to his beloved pursuits. In Edward's reign, he married, and obtained preferment; now when the persecution began, he was soon selected as a victim, and brought before Bonner, who had superseded Ridley in the see of London. Bonner desired him to write his opinion concerning Transubstantiation: he obeyed without hesitation, saying, as he delivered the writing, "My Lord, ye do seek my blood, and ye shall have it. I pray God, that ye may be so baptized in it, that ye may thereafter loathe bloodsucking, and become a better man." When he spoke of his conscience, Bonner exclaimed, "A goodly conscience truly: it would make our Queen a bastard, would it not, I pray you?" Saunders replied, "We go about no such matter. Let them care for that, whose writings are yet in the hands of men, witnessing the same, not without the great reproach and shame of the authors." . . . For Bonner had, in Henry's reign, written and printed a book, wherein he declared the marriage with Catharine unlawful, and the Princess Mary illegitimate. This retort touched him, and he immediately said, "Carry away this frenzy fool to prison!"

While Saunders had lived in expectation of being thus apprehended, he was disquieted; and he said to a friend who observed this, "In very deed, I am in prison till I be in prison." Having been seized, he knew that the die was cast for death: from that moment, all perturbation ceased; and, by a curious effect of the mind upon the body, the emotion which he felt during his first examination was rendered purely pleasurable: he described it, to a fellow-prisoner, as a sense of refreshment issuing from every part and member towards the heart, and from thence ebbing and flowing to and fro; and he believed it to be "a certain taste of the Communion of Saints, wonderfully comforting him, not only in spirit, but in body also." * He charged his wife, that she should make no suit for him, and assured her of his cheerful constancy, thanks to his God and his Christ, "in whom, and

* Fox, iii. p. 110.

through whom, I shall," said he, "I know, be able to fight a good fight, and finish a good course, and receive the crown which is laid up in store for me and all the true soldiers of Christ." "Thank you know whom," he continued, "for her most sweet and comfortable putting me in remembrance of my journey whither I am passing. God send us all good speed, and a joyful meeting! I have too few such friends to further me in that journey, which is, indeed, the greatest friendship."

The keeper of the Marshalsea prison had been ordered to let no person visit him. His wife, therefore, when she came to the prison-gate, with her infant in her arms, was refused admittance; but the keeper, with more humanity than was usual in men of his vocation, carried the infant to its father. They who were present admired the child; upon which Saunders exclaimed, "What man, fearing God, would not lose this present life, rather than, by prolonging it, adjudge this boy to be a bastard, his wife a whore, and himself a whoremonger? Yea, if there were no other cause for which a man of my estate should lose his life, yet who would not give it, to avouch this child to be legitimate, and his marriage to be lawful and holy!"* This burst of feeling may explain, why it was that, during this persecution, the married† clergy were observed to suffer with most alacrity. They were bearing testimony to the validity and sanctity of their marriage, against the foul and unchristian aspersions of the Romish persecutors; the honour of their wives and children was at stake; the desire of leaving them an unsullied name and a virtuous example, combined with the sense of religious duty; and thus the heart derived strength from the very ties which, in other circumstances, might have weakened it.

When Saunders had been kept fifteen months in prison (for he had been committed at the commencement of this bloody reign), he was brought before the Council, where Gardiner told him, it was now thought good that mercy should be shewn to such as would seek it. "We have fallen in manner all," said he; "but now we be risen again, and returned to the Catholic Church, you must rise with us, and come home unto it. Leave off your painting and pride of speech; for such is the fashion of you all, to please yourselves in your glorious words. Answer, . . . yea or nay!" "My lord," replied the martyr, "it is no time for me to paint; and as for pride, there is no great cause why it should be in me. My learning, I confess to be but small; and as for riches or worldly wealth, I have none. But it standeth

* Fox, iii. p. 113.

† Fuller, b. viii. p. 23.

me to answer circumspectly, considering that one of these two extreme perils are like to fall upon me, the losing of a good conscience, or of this my body and life. And I tell you truth, I love both life and liberty, if I could enjoy them without the hurt of my conscience."

"Conscience!" replied Gardiner; "you have none at all, but pride and arrogancy: dividing yourselves, by singularity, from the Church." Upon this, Saunders made answer, "The Lord is the knower of all men's consciences. But for dividing myself from the Church, I live in the faith wherein I have been brought up, since I was fourteen years old; being taught that the power of the Bishop of Rome is but usurped, with many other abuses springing thereof. Yea, this I have received, even at your hands that are here present, as a thing agreed upon by the Catholic Church and public authority." Bonner then interfered, saying, "I have his hand against the blessed sacrament. How say you to that?" He replied, "What I have written, I have written; and further I will not accuse myself. But I beseech your honours, to be means to the Queen's Majesty, for such a pardon for us, that we may live, and keep our consciences unclogged, and we shall live as most obedient subjects. Otherwise, for myself, I must say, that, by God's grace, I will abide the most extremity that man may do against me." "Ah, sirrah," cried Gardiner, "you would live as you list! The Donatists desired to live in singularity, but they were not meet to live on earth: no more be you; and that shall you understand within these seven days; . . . therefore away with him!"

Being thus assured of speedy death, he wrote to his wife, saying, he was shortly to be despatched to Christ, and desiring her to send him a shirt, "which," said he, "you know whereunto it is consecrated. Let it be sewed down on both sides, and not open. O my heavenly Father, look upon me in the face of thy Christ, or else I shall not be able to abide thy countenance! He will do so, and therefore I will not be afraid what sin, death, and hell can do against me. O wife, always remember the Lord! . . . God bless you! Yea, He will bless thee, good wife, and thy poor boy also. Only cleave thou unto Him, and He will give thee all things." The crimes of those miserable days called forth virtues equal to the occasion. A wife who prepared the garment in which her husband was to suffer at the stake, must indeed have been a true helpmate, and one who possessed a heart which could feel and understand how much his fortitude would be confirmed and comforted by a reliance upon hers.

This excellent martyr was sent to Coventry for execution, because he had held preferment in the cathedral of that diocese; and because the Queen's counsellors, as impolitic as they were inhuman, thought to strike terror throughout the kingdom, by exhibiting everywhere these terrible examples. With this view, Hooper was ordered to Gloucester, there to suffer on the day after Saunders had borne his testimony in the flames. Hooper, when bishop of that see, had held Worcester *in commendam*. Promotion had wrought no change in this austere and conscientious prelate, "who, being bishop of two dioceses," says Fox, "so ruled and guided either of them, and both together, as though he had no charge but one family. No father in his household, no gardener in his garden, no husbandman in his vineyard, was more employed than he in his diocese among his flock, going about the towns and villages, teaching and preaching to the people there." His custom had been, every day to entertain a certain number of the poor in his common hall: he or his chaplains examined them first in the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the articles of their belief; "they were then served by four at a mess with whole and wholesome meats;" and it was not till after they were served that he himself sate down to dinner.

Hooper had looked on to martyrdom as the probable termination of his course. When, upon the tidings of Edward's accession, he left his asylum at Zurich, Bullinger, who had been his singular friend in that hospitable city, requested that he would correspond with him. He promised this; but taking him earnestly by the hand, added, "The last news of all I shall not be able to write; for there, where I shall take most pains, there shall you hear of me to be burnt to ashes." His friends urged him to fly while he could yet escape; but he, judging, and rightly, that his life would profit more in its sacrifice than by its preservation, replied, "Once I did flee, and take unto my feet; but now, being called to this place and vocation, I am thoroughly persuaded to tarry, and to live and die with my sheep." He was soon arrested and brought to London, and Gardiner's first question to him was, whether he was married? "Yea, my lord," answered Hooper, "and will not be unmarried, till death unmarry me." Tonstall, contrary to his usual benign nature, treated him with indignity upon this point, and called him beast; and saying that this was matter enough to deprive him, asked him the more deadly question concerning the sacrament, to which he answered explicitly, without hesitation. He was then com-

mitted to close prison in the Fleet, and there treated with such inhumanity, that the disease, which ill usage, a damp prison, and foul air produced, had nearly prevented the purpose of his enemies. The names of those persons who relieved him there with alms, were taken by the jailor to Gardiner, to bring on their ruin.

Hooper and Rogers were sometimes brought up together for examination ; and as they passed through the streets the people crowded round them, so that the Sheriff had some difficulty to make way through the press. The persons whom Gardiner and his colleagues had selected to be their first victims, were all men whose integrity and holiness of life commanded respect even from those who differed with them in opinion ; their preaching, however popular, had never at any time been so efficacious as their example now ; many, therefore, in the crowd avowedly rejoiced at their constancy ; and when they were conducted back after night had closed, the officers were sent before to put out the costermongers' candles (London had no lamps then), that they might pass unseen, and thus avoid these demonstrations of good will. But the people expected their coming, and many came out of their doors with lights, to salute and encourage them, and pray God that He would strengthen them to the end. The Romanists continually spread reports that some of their most distinguished prisoners had acknowledged their errors, and abjured them. They did this to abate the constancy of others, knowing what consolation and what fortitude each of these confessors derived from the sympathy and example of his brethren. The prisoners, however, found means of communicating even when at a distance ; and Hooper, who had not been reconciled to Ridley since the dispute concerning the habits at his consecration, wrote to him now, prisoner to prisoner, as his dear brother and reverend fellow-elder in Christ. Ridley replied in the same Christian temper : "Forasmuch," says he, "as we thoroughly agree and wholly consent together in those things which are the grounds and substantial points of our religion, against the which the world so furiously rageth in these our days, . . . howsoever in times past, by certain bye-matters and circumstances of religion, your wisdom and my simplicity (I grant) hath jarred, each of us following the abundance of his own sense and judgment, . . . now, I say, be you assured, that even with my whole heart, God is my witness, I love you in the truth, and for the truth's sake which abideth in us, and I am persuaded shall, by the grace of God, abide in us for evermore."

But the report of Hooper's recantation was spread so confidently, that many of the Protestants believed it, . . . the more readily, because Bonner and his chaplains came to him sometimes, endeavouring to win him over. As soon as he understood this report, he wrote a letter, addressed to all that unfeignedly looked for the coming of our Saviour, lamenting in this, that his dear brethren, who have not yet, said he, felt such dangers for God's truth as we have, and do feel, and be daily like to suffer more, yea, the very extreme and vile death of the fire, should lightly believe that he, John Hooper, a condemned man for the cause of Christ, should, after sentence of death, being then in Newgate prisoner, and looking daily for execution, recant and abjure that which theretofore he had preached. Had he refused to talk with the Bishop of London and his chaplains, they might have just occasion, he said, to say that he was unlearned, and durst not speak with learned men; or else that he was proud, and disdained to speak with them. Therefore he always spoke with them when they came, not fearing their arguments, but being more confirmed in the truths which he had preached. He prayed, therefore, that the weak brethren might be certified of the truth, and not trouble him with such reports. "For I have hitherto," said he, "left all things of this world, and suffered great pains and imprisonment; and I thank God I am as ready to suffer death as a mortal man may be. It were better for them to pray for us, than to credit or report such rumours. We have enow of such as know not God truly; but the false report of weak brethren is a double cross. . . . I have taught the truth with my tongue, and with my pen, heretofore; and hereafter shortly shall confirm the same, by God's grace, with my blood."

Two days after this noble letter was written, the ceremony of degrading was performed upon him and Rogers together. Rogers was led to execution; and Hooper, on the following morning, sent, in custody of six of the Queen's guards, to Gloucester, there to suffer. He rejoiced at this, "praising God that He saw it good to send him amongst the people over whom he was pastor, there to confirm, with his death, the truth which he had before taught them; not doubting but that the Lord would give him strength to perform the same to His glory." Sir Anthony Kingston, one of his personal friends, was one of the persons appointed, by the Queen's letters, to see execution done upon him. This knight, as soon as he saw him, burst into tears, and would have persuaded him to preserve his life by submitting to the ruling powers. The Bishop meekly answered,

"I am come hither to suffer death, because I will not gainsay the truth, that I have heretofore taught amongst you; and I thank you for your friendly counsel, although it be not so friendly as I could have wished it. True it is, Master Kingston, that death is bitter and life is sweet; but I have settled myself, through the strength of God's Holy Spirit, patiently to pass through the torments and extremities of the fire now prepared for me, rather than deny the truth of His word; desiring you and others, in the meantime, to commend me to God's mercy in your prayers." Sir Anthony then perceiving, as he said, there was no remedy, took leave of him, thanking God that he had ever known Hooper, who had reclaimed him from a vicious and adulterous course of life. Hooper was moved to tears at his departure, and declared, that all the troubles he had sustained in prison had not caused him to utter so much sorrow.

When he was delivered by the guards into the Sheriff's custody, the Mayor and Aldermen saluted him respectfully, and took him by the hand. The Bishop thanked them for thus acknowledging their old friendship toward one who was now a prisoner and condemned man; and requested, as the only favour, that there might be a quick fire, shortly to make an end. The Sheriffs would have lodged him, for that night, in the common gaol, if the guards had not interceded, saying, how mildly and patiently he had behaved on the way, . . . that a child might keep him, . . . and that they themselves, though now discharged of their commission, would rather watch with him than that he should be sent to the common prison. He was lodged, therefore, in a private house; and, retiring early to bed, rose after one sound sleep, and bestowed the rest of the time in prayer, requesting that he might be left alone till the hour of execution. When he saw a company of men with bills and other weapons, to guard the place of suffering, he observed to the Sheriffs, that there had been no need of them, saying, "If ye had willed me, I would have gone alone to the stake, and have troubled none of you." It was a market-day, and about seven thousand persons were assembled. The sight of the multitude made him say to those who were near him, "Peradventure they think to hear something from me, as they have in times past; but alas, speech is prohibited me! Notwithstanding, the cause of my death is well known unto them. When I was their pastor, I preached unto them true and sincere doctrine, and that out of the Word of God. Because I will not now account the same to be heresy and untruth, this kind of death is prepared for me."

"So he went forward," says Fox, "led between the two Sheriffs (as it were a lamb to the place of slaughter), in a gown of his host's, his hat upon his head, and a staff in his hand to stay himself withal; for the sciatica, which he had taken in prison, caused him somewhat to halt." He had been ordered not to speak; "but beholding the people all the way which mourned bitterly for him, he would sometimes lift up his eyes toward heaven, and look cheerfully upon such as he knew; and he was never known, during the time of his being amongst them, to look with so cheerful and ruddy a countenance as he did at that present." The stake had been made ready near a great elm tree, in front of the cathedral where he was wont to preach. "The place round about, the houses, and the boughs of the tree, were replenished with people, and in the chamber over the college-gate, stood the priests of the college." While he was on his knees in prayer, a box containing his pardon was brought and laid before him; at the sight whereof, he twice exclaimed, "If you love my soul, away with it!" Lord Chandos, who presided at this abominable execution, was so jealous of the effect which whatever came from Hooper's lips might produce upon the people, that he ordered those persons to a distance who were intently hearkening to his prayer; not, however, till they had heard a few sentences, and among them these words: "Well knowest Thou, Lord, wherefore I am come hither to suffer, and why the wicked do persecute this thy poor servant; not for my sins and transgressions committed against Thee, but because I will not allow their wicked doings, to the denial of the knowledge of thy truth, wherewith it did please Thee by thy Holy Spirit to instruct me; the which, with as much diligence as a poor wretch could (being thereto called), I have set forth to thy glory. And well seest Thou, my Lord and God, what terrible pains and cruel torments be prepared for thy creature; such, Lord, as without thy strength, none is able to bear, or patiently to pass. But all things, that are impossible with man, are possible with Thee. Therefore strengthen me of thy goodness, that in the fire I break not the rules of patience; or else assuage the terror of the pains, as shall seem most to thy glory."

In full reliance upon the support for which he prayed, when they fastened his neck and legs, as well as his body, by hoops of iron to the stake, he assured them that trouble was needless, for God, he doubted not, would give him strength to abide the extremity of the fire without bands. He would fain not have taken off his doublet and hose, but the sheriffs required them;

such, says the Martyrologist, was their greediness! . . . so that he remained in his shirt; and being a tall man, and raised on a high stool, he was seen by all the people; and in the sight of that great multitude, among whom a few hearts remained unmoved, he, as he had prayed that he might do, patiently endured what was indeed the extremity of the fire; . . . for through all the Marian persecution, there was no other so lingering a martyrdom. But the voice with which he called upon his Redeemer was not as the voice of one impatient, or overcome with pain: he remained calm and still to the last, without a struggle; and at length, in the words of the faithful old narrator, died as quietly as a child in his bed.

On the same day that Hooper suffered martyrdom, Dr Rowland Taylor in like manner bore his testimony to the same cause, at Hadley in Suffolk. When the living of that town was given him, he was one of Cranmer's household; but going immediately to reside there, he forwarded the work which had been begun by Bilney's preaching, and brought over a manufacturing population to a proper sense of religion, and to that consequent state of morals and manners, which nothing but religion can produce. It had been his practice to visit the sick, the poor, and the needy, to comfort them, relieve them, and instruct them; and he called regularly upon the rich clothiers, to go with him to the alms-houses, and see that everything was duly provided there, his exhortations and example making them contribute their proper part to these works of charity. Some zealous Romanists, with a few armed followers, brought a neighbouring priest, and took forcible possession of his church, when the old religion was restored. Taylor, as the shepherd appointed to feed that flock, ordered these Popish wolves, as he called them, to depart: upon which they turned him out of the church, closed the doors to exclude the people, who were zealous in their minister's behalf, performed Mass, and then lodged a complaint against him, upon which he was summoned before Gardiner. When his friends importuned him to escape, and reminded him that Christ had enjoined his disciples, when they were persecuted in one city, to flee into another, he replied, "I am old, and have already lived too long, to see these terrible and most wicked days. Fly you, and do as your conscience leadeth you! I know that there is neither justice nor truth to be looked for at my adversaries' hands; but rather imprisonment and cruel death. Yet know I my cause to be so good and righteous, and the truth so strong upon my side, that I will, by God's grace, go and appear before

them, and to their beards resist them. God will hereafter raise up teachers to his people, who will with more diligence and fruit teach them than I have done. He will not forsake his Church, though now for a time he trieth and correcteth us, and not without just cause. As for me, I shall never be able to do so good service, nor have so glorious a calling, nor so great mercy of God proffered me, as at this present. Wherefore, I beseech you, and all other my friends, to pray for me; and I doubt not but God will give me strength and his Holy Spirit, that all mine adversaries shall have shame of their doings."

Accordingly, in obedience to the summons, he set out for London, accompanied by a faithful servant, named John Hull, who, on the way, entreated him to fly, offering to follow him anywhere, and in all perils to venture his life for him and with him. But his determination had been made. "O John," he said, "remember the good shepherd, Christ, which not alone fed his flock, but also died for it. Him must I follow; and, with God's grace, will do. Therefore, good John, pray for me; and if thou seest me weak at any time, comfort me, and discourage me not in this my godly enterprise and purpose." When he presented himself before Gardiner, that persecutor, with his usual brutality, called him knave, traitor, and heretic; and exclaimed, "Art thou come, thou villain? How darest thou look me in the face for shame? Knowest thou not who I am?" "Yes," quoth Taylor, "ye are Dr Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor, . . . and yet but a mortal man, I trow. But if I should be afraid of your lordly looks, why fear you not God, the Lord of us all? How dare ye, for shame, look any Christian man in the face, seeing ye have forsaken the truth, and done contrary to your own oath and writing? With what countenance will ye appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and answer to your oath, made first unto that blessed King Henry VIII., of famous memory, and afterward unto blessed King Edward, his son?" The Bishop answered, that was Herod's oath; he had done well in breaking it, and the Pope had discharged him of it: and when the brave Protestant told him, no man could assoil him from it, and that Christ would require it at his hands, Gardiner told him, he was an arrogant knave and a very fool. "My Lord," he replied, "leave your unseemly railing! for I am a Christian man; and you know, he that sayeth to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but he that sayeth, Thou Fool, is in danger of hell-fire." Presently Gardiner said to him, "Thou art married."

He replied, "I thank God I am, and have had nine children." And when he was charged with having opposed the priest who said Mass in his church, he answered, "My lord, I am parson of Hadley, and it is against all right, conscience, and laws, that any man should come into my charge, and presume to infect the flock committed unto me, with venom of the Popish idolatrous Mass."

He was then ordered to the King's Bench, there to be straitly kept. At this time, so many of the best and ablest men in England were committed for the same cause, "that almost all the prisons," says Fox, "were become right Christian schools and churches; so that there was no greater comfort for Christian hearts than to come to the prisons, to behold their virtuous conversation, and to hear their prayers, preachings, most godly exhortations, and consolations." He found, in the King's Bench, an excellent fellow-prisoner, John Bradford, destined to the same fate, and prepared, with the same courage, to embrace it. Each looked upon the company of the other as an especial mercy provided for him. Taylor was summoned first, but not till he had lain nearly two years in prison. When the mockery of degrading him was performed, Bonner, who officiated, was about to strike him on the breast with the crozier, as part of the ceremony; but one of the chaplains, marking Taylor's countenance, called out to the Bishop not to strike, for he would strike again. "Yea, by St Peter, will I!" quoth Taylor; "the cause is Christ's, and I were no good Christian if I would not fight in my master's quarrel." . . . "By my troth," said he, laughing and rubbing his hands, when he related this to Bradford, "I made him believe I would do so!"

During this persecution, prisoners were treated much more humanely in the Queen's, than in the Bishops' prisons; for the keepers of the latter thought to recommend themselves by a display of zeal, in the rigour with which they treated those who were committed to their charge. The night after his degradation, by the jailor's favour, his wife, with one of his sons, and the faithful John Hull, were permitted to sup with him. In exhorting the boy to a virtuous life, he bade him remember, that his father died in the defence of holy marriage. He charged his wife, who, he said, had been a faithful yoke-fellow to him, and would now soon be discharged of that wedlock-bond, to marry again, as soon as God should provide her an honest and religious man, who would be a merciful father to her poor children. For herself and them, this, he said, was the only course that could

bring them out of troubles; and he bequeathed them to the Almighty's protection, saying, that he was going to those of his children whom God had taken to himself, and whom he named, . . . five in number.

His wife suspected that he would be removed that night, and therefore, when she left the prison, went, with one of her daughters, and an orphan girl, whom Dr Taylor had bred up, and watched all night in the church porch of St Botolph's, beside Aldgate, by which she knew he must pass. It was early in February: at two in the morning, one of the Sheriffs (that Sir William Chester to whom Saunders had been indentured), a humane and compassionate man, came to conduct him to an inn without Aldgate, where the Sheriff of Essex was to take him in charge. They went without lights; but when they approached the church, the orphan heard them coming, and exclaiming, "O my dear father!" called upon her mother. "Rowland, Rowland," said the wife, "where art thou?" For it was so dark, that they could not see each other. He answered her, and stopt: the men would have hurried him on, but the Sheriff desired them to let him stay awhile and speak to his wife. Taylor then took his daughter in his arms, and kneeling in the porch, with his wife and the orphan girl, said the Lord's Prayer. He then kissed her, and shaking her by the hand, said, "Farewell, dear wife! be of good comfort, for I am quiet in my conscience." And blessing the children, he charged them to stand strong and stedfast unto Christ, and keep themselves from idolatry. Then said his wife, "God be with thee, dear Rowland; I will, with God's grace, meet thee at Hadley." She followed them to the inn; but the Sheriff, who had wept apace during their sad interview, would, in mercy, allow no more such meetings. He entreated her to go to his house, and use it as her own, promising she should lack nothing, and sent two officers to conduct her thither; but at her request, she was taken to her own mother's, who was charged to keep her there.

A little before noon the Sheriff of Essex arrived; Taylor was then placed on horseback, and brought out of the inn. John Hull was waiting without the gates with Taylor's son: Taylor called the child, and John lifted him up, and set him on the horse before his father. "Good people," said he, "this is mine own son, begotten in lawful matrimony, . . . and God be blessed for lawful matrimony." He then prayed for the boy, laid his hand on his head, and blessed him, and returned him again to John, whom he took by the hand, saying, "Farewell, John Hull,

the faithfullest servant that ever man had!" And so they rode forth, the Sheriff of Essex, with four yeomen of the guard and the Sheriff's men, leading him. When they came to Brentwood, a close hood was made for him, with holes for the eyes and mouth, that he might not be recognised on the way. They halted for the night at Chelmsford, where the Sheriff of Suffolk met them. The other Sheriff here, while they were at supper, entreated him to be reconciled to the Church, praising him for his learning and good report, and promising that he and all his friends would be suitors for him to the Queen. Taylor knew how little argument would avail, and therefore expressed his resolution in a manner characteristic of his temper. "Mr Sheriff," said he, "and my masters all, I heartily thank you for your good will; I have hearkened to your words, and marked well your counsels; and, to be plain with you, I do perceive that I have been deceived myself, and am likely to deceive a great many of Hadley of their expectation." With that word they all rejoiced. "Yea, good master Doctor," quoth the Sheriff, "God's blessing on your heart; hold you thus still! It is the comfortabest word that we have heard you speak yet. What! should ye cast away yourself in vain? Play a wise man's part; and I dare warrant it, ye shall find favour." "Would you know my meaning plainly?" said Taylor; "then I will tell you how I have been deceived, and, as I think, shall deceive a great many. I am, as you see, a man that hath a very great carcass, which I thought should have been buried in Hadley churchyard, if I had died in my bed, as I well hoped I should have done. And thus a great number of worms in Hadley churchyard should have had jolly feeding upon this carrion, which they have looked for many a day. But now I know we be deceived, both I and they; for this carcass must be burnt to ashes, and so shall they lose their bait."

When they entered Suffolk, a number of gentry, who had been appointed to aid the Sheriff, met them; they assured him that they had his pardon ready, and promised him promotion to a bishopric, if he would accept it. These offers were in vain, "for he had not built his house upon the sand, in fear of falling with every puff of wind, but upon the sure and immoveable rock, Christ, wherefore he abode constant and unmoveable to the end." As they approached Hadley, in answer to a question from the Sheriff how he fared? he answered, "Never better; I am almost at home. I lack not past two stiles to go over, and I am even at my Father's house." A poor man was waiting for him at the

bridge foot, with five small children ; they fell upon their knees, holding up their hands, and the man cried, " O dear father, and good shepherd, Doctor Taylor, God help and succour thee, as thou hast many a time succoured me and my poor children ! " The streets through which he passed were lined with people, some of whom, when they saw him thus led to a cruel death, cried out, " There goeth our good shepherd, that so faithfully hath taught us, so fatherly hath cared for us, and so godly hath governed us ! What shall become of this most wicked world ? Good Lord, strengthen him and comfort him ! " The Sheriff and his men rebuked the people sternly for thus expressing their feelings ; but Taylor evermore said to them, " I have preached to you God's word and truth, and am come this day to seal it with my blood. "

As he passed the alms-houses he gave among their inmates what was left of the money with which charitable persons had supplied him during his long imprisonment. He carried it in a glove, and, inquiring at the last of those houses whether the blind man and woman who dwelt there, were living, threw the glove in at their window, and rode on to Aldham Common, where he was to suffer. When they told him that was the place, he exclaimed, " God be thanked, I am even at home ! " and, alighting from his horse, he tore with both his hands the hood from his head. The people burst into loud weeping when they saw " his reverend and ancient face with a long white beard, " and his gray hairs, which had been roughly clipped and disfigured at his degradation : and they cried out, " God save thee, good Dr Taylor ! Christ strengthen thee, and help thee ! " He attempted to speak to them, but one of the guards thrust a staff into his mouth ; and when he asked leave of the Sheriff to speak, the Sheriff refused it, and bade him remember his promise to the council : upon which he replied, " Well, promise must be kept. " The common belief was, that after the martyrs were condemned, the council told them their tongues should be cut out, unless they would promise that at their deaths they would not speak to the people. None of the martyrs received more open sympathy from the spectators, nor was there any one to whom so much brutality was shewn by those who officially attended. When he had undressed himself to his shirt, he said, with a loud voice, " Good people, I have taught you nothing but God's holy word, and those lessons that I have taken out of God's blessed book, the Holy Bible : and I am come hither this day to seal it with my blood. " One of the guard, a fellow who had used him inhumanly all the way, struck him on the head with a staff,

saying, "Is that keeping thy promise, thou heretic?" Taylor then knelt and prayed; and a poor woman, in spite of the guards, who threatened to tread her down under their horses' feet, prayed beside him. Taylor then kissed the stake, got into the pitch-barrel in which he was to stand, and stood upright, his hands folded, and his eyes raised toward heaven in prayer. A butcher who was ordered to assist in setting up the faggots refused, and persisted in the refusal, though the Sheriff threatened to send him to prison. Wretches, however, were easily found for this work, and one of them threw a faggot at the martyr as he stood chained to the stake, which cut his face so that the blood ran down. "O friend," said Taylor, "I have harm enough! what needed that?" Sir John Shelton hearing him repeat the Psalm *Miserere* in English, struck him on the lips, saying, "Ye knave, speak Latin; I will make thee!" And when the fire had been kindled, and he stood patient and unmoved, with his hands folded in prayer, a fellow, whose character made the action appear an impulse of brutality, rather than compassion, cleft his skull with a halberd, and the body then fell forward. "Thus rendered the man* of God his blessed soul into the hands of his merciful Father, and to his most dear and certain Saviour Jesus Christ, whom he most entirely loved, faithfully and earnestly preached, obediently followed in living, and constantly glorified in death."

The effect of such executions was what the sufferers trusted it would be, not what the persecutors intended and expected. It seemed as if the martyrs bequeathed to their friends and followers, like Elijah the prophet, a double portion of their spirit, from the flames amid which they ascended to their everlasting reward. "I thought," said Bradford, in a letter to Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, who were then fellow-prisoners at Oxford, . . . "I thought your staves had stood next the door; but now it is otherwise perceived. Our dear brother Rogers hath broken the ice valiantly; and this day, I think, or to-morrow at the uttermost, hearty Hooper, sincere Saunders, and trusty Taylor, end their course, and receive their crown. The next am I, which hourly look for the porter to open me the gates after them, to enter into the desired rest. God forgive me mine unthankfulness for this exceeding great mercy, that amongst so many thousands, it

* Father Persons, in his *Three Conversions*, calls this excellent martyr "a very gross and sensual fellow, as well in mind as in body. In very deed," says this thorough-paced Romanist, "the miser-

able man's business was principally to have his woman,—and with this faith he went to the fire, where we must leave him eternally, as I fear!"

pleaseth his mercy to choose me to be one, in whom he will suffer! . . . Oh, what am I, Lord, that thou shouldest thus magnify me, so vile a man and miser as always I have been! Is this thy wont to send for such a wretch and hypocrite as I have been, in a fiery chariot, as thou didst for Elias? . . . Dear fathers, be thankful for me, that I still might be found worthy. . . . And for your parts, make you ready, for we are but your gentlemen-ushers. The marriage of the Lamb is prepared; come unto the marriage!" To this Ridley replied, "Happy are you that ever you were born, thus to be found awake at the Lord's calling. Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been trusty in small matters, He shall set thee over great things, and thou shalt enter into the joy of thy Lord! . . . If it be not the place that sanctifieth the man, but the holy man doth by Christ sanctify the place, brother Bradford, then happy and holy shall be that place wherein thou shalt suffer, and that shall be with thy ashes in Christ's cause sprinkled over withal! . . . So long as I shall understand thou art on thy journey, I shall call upon our heavenly Father to set thee safely home; and then, good brother, speak you, and pray for the remnant which are to suffer for Christ's sake, according to that thou then shalt know more clearly. . . . We do look now every day when we shall be called on. I ween I am the weakest, many ways, of our company, . . . and yet, I thank our Lord, that since I heard of our dear brother Rogers' departing, and stout confession of Christ and his truth even unto the death, my heart (blessed be God!) rejoiced of it; that since that time (I say) I never felt any lumpish heaviness in my heart, as I grant I have felt sometimes before. O good brother, blessed be God in thee, and blessed be the time that ever I knew thee! Farewell! farewell!"

John Bradford, whom Ridley thus affectionately addressed, was a native of Manchester, who had been in the service of Sir John Harrington, and by him employed in places of trust and profit. While in that service he was prevailed upon once to pass a false account. He was struck with compunction for this, upon hearing one of Latimer's searching sermons, and forthwith made full* restitution, parting with his little patrimony for that purpose. He had given up fair prospects of worldly fortune, that he might become a preacher of the Gospel; and having graduated at Cambridge, was ordained by Ridley, licensed to preach, and promoted to a prebend in St Paul's. There was a baseness in the circumstances of his arrest, worthy of the men to whom the

* Strype's Annals, vol. iii. Appendix, p. 19.

business of eradicating the Reformation had been committed. When at the commencement of Queen Mary's reign a dagger was thrown at the preacher in St Paul's, Bradford was standing behind him in the pulpit; and the preacher, seeing his life threatened and actually in danger, entreated him, as a man whose opinions were acceptable to the people, to come forward and protect him. Bradford accordingly addressed the turbulent congregation, quieted them for a time, and not without some exertion, and the aid of the Mayor and Sheriffs, lodged the preacher safely in the nearest house. He preached himself in the evening at Bow Church, and severely reprov'd the people for their seditious misdemeanour; though such was the temper of those citizens who held the Protestant faith, and apprehended what would be the measures of the new Government, that he was told, if he dared reprove them, he should not come out of the pulpit alive. Within three days he was committed to prison, charged with sedition because of the influence which he had exercised over the populace.

After a year and half's imprisonment, he was brought up before the Council: Bourne, the man whose life he had saved, and who had meantime been made Bishop of Bath, being one. Bonner, who had been present at the riot, affirmed that he took upon him to rule and lead the people malapertly, thereby declaring that he was the author of the sedition; and his protestations, and appeals to Bourne himself, that what he had done had been at Bourne's request, and at the peril of his own life, were disregarded. He was told, however, that the time of mercy was come; and that, if he would do as they had done, he should receive the Queen's pardon. Bradford replied, he had done nothing that required pardon, nothing that was contrary to the laws. "I desire mercy," said he, "with God's mercy; but mercy, with God's wrath, God keep me from!" "Well," said Gardiner, "if thou make this babbling, being altogether ignorant and vain-glorious, and wilt not receive mercy offered thee, know, for truth, that the Queen is minded to make a purgation of all such as thou art." Bourne himself was vile enough to aggravate the charges against him, saying, he had done more harm by letters, during his imprisonment, than ever he did by preaching, when he was at large.

Bradford might have escaped from prison, if he had thought fit. The keepers had such perfect confidence in him, that they let him go into the city to visit a sick friend, and would even have allowed him to ride into the country. But he was one of

those persons who believed that the cause of religion was at this time best to be served by bearing testimony to it in death. This he held to be the only resistance which was lawful. The advice which he gave to the Protestants was, "Howsoever you do, be obedient to the higher powers; that is, in no point, either in hand or tongue, rebel; but rather, if they command that which with good conscience you cannot obey, lay your head on the block, and suffer whatsoever they shall do. By patience, possess your souls." To his mother he said, "Perchance you are weakened in that which I have preached, because God doth not defend it as you think, but suffereth the Popish doctrines to come again, and prevail. Good mother, God by this doth prove and try his people: . . . when the blast cometh, then flieth away the chaff, but the wheat remaineth." And he encouraged her to suffer for the truth, rather than forsake it: "Sure may we be," he said, "that, of all deaths, it is most to be desired to die for God's sake. You shall see that I speak as I think; for, by God's grace, I will drink, before you, of this cup, if I be put to it. I doubt not but God will give me his grace, and strengthen me thereunto: pray that he would, and that I refuse it not! In peace, when no persecution was, then were you content, and glad to hear me; then did you believe me: and will ye not do so now, seeing I speak that which I trust, by God's grace, to verify with my life?"

Great efforts were made to induce him to submit himself, and be reconciled to the Romish Church. They told him, that Cranmer, and his companions at Oxford, were unable to answer the Catholic divines, and had, therefore, desired to confer with some of them, for the purpose of a reconciliation; and they urged him, in like manner to ask for time and learned advisers. But he replied, that he would make no such request, which would be giving occasion for the people to think he doubted of his doctrine, wherein he was most assured. But when they insisted upon bringing learned men to him, he assented, in order that all men might know he feared not to have his faith sifted and tried. They brought, at different times, their most practised disputants, the Bishop of Chichester and the Archbishop of York among others, and Philip's confessor, F. Alonso de Castro. This Spaniard, who was afterwards raised to the see of Santiago de Compostella, had distinguished himself by his writings against the heretics. It is greatly to his honour, that, having justified, in his books, the punishment of heresy by death, what he saw in England brought him to a better mind, insomuch that he

ventured to touch upon the subject when preaching before Philip, and censured the English Prelates for their severity, saying, they learnt it not in Scripture to burn any for their conscience, but rather that they should live and be converted : unless, indeed, which there is too much reason to suspect, this was done with a political view, and in obedience to his instructions ; otherwise such opinions would have, more probably, conducted him to the Inquisition, than to Compostella.

The argument turned always upon the corporal presence ; and Bradford had little difficulty in making his part good. Some disputes which had arisen among his fellow-prisoners, troubled him far more. There were a few who held Arian opinions : more, who opposed the doctrines of absolute predestination and original sin, which some of the Reformers held in their extreme meaning. Bradford was assisted, in conciliating these disputants, by Taylor, Philpot, and Bishop Farrer, and by the imprisoned Prelates at Oxford, whom they requested to take cognisance of the matter, and remedy it. But the most effectual argument was, an appeal to their common danger, and their common cause. "Let us take up our cross together," said Philpot, "and go to the Mount of Calvary !" "I am going before you," said Bradford, "to my God and your God, to my Father and your Father, to my Christ and your Christ, to my home and your home."

At length, the keeper's wife, with great emotion, told him, she was come to bring him heavy news, . . . they were preparing his chain, and on the morrow he must be burnt. Bradford upon that put off his cap, and, lifting up his eyes, thanked God. "I have looked for this a long time," said he, "and therefore it cometh not now to me suddenly, but as a thing waited for every day and hour : the Lord make me worthy thereof !" He retired into his chamber, and prayed awhile in secret ; and when night came, dressed himself in a shirt, which had been made by a faithful friend, for his burning. About midnight, they removed him from the Counter to Newgate, thinking that, at that hour, there would be none stirring abroad ; but the news had been divulged, and multitudes waited for him on the way, to give and receive the last farewell and the last blessing. The report was, that the execution was to take place at four in the morning, . . . and at that early hour Smithfield was crowded with people ; but it was not till nine that he was brought out from Newgate, and with him an apprentice, John Leaf by name, who was to be his stake-fellow, . . . a word which the dreadful state of things had brought into common use. The lad (for he was only in his

twentieth year) could neither write nor read, and was condemned to this inhuman death for holding the faith in which he had been brought up, that material bread remained in the sacrament, and that confession to a priest was not necessary to salvation. Two papers had been presented to him in prison, one containing a recantation, the other a confession of his opinions, that he might choose between life and death, by setting his hand to the one. The recantation was read to him first; he desired then to hear the other, and when he had heard it, pricked his hand, and sprinkled the blood upon the paper, bidding them carry the bill to the Bishop, and shew him that he had sealed it with his blood already. A spirit like this needed no example to encourage it. The elder martyr comforted him, and exhorted the people to repentance; for which, Woodroff the sheriff, as much noted for brutality, as Chester, his colleague, was for gentleness, ordered his hands to be tied; the wretch had, just before, struck Bradford's brother-in-law on the head so violently, that the blood ran about his shoulders. Bradford appeared as superior to pain as he had been to fear. "He endured the flame as a fresh gale of wind in a hot summer's day;" and his last audible words were, "Strait is the way, and narrow is the gate that leadeth to salvation, and few there be that find it:" . . . words uttered with the feeling of one who had trod in that way, and was then even on the threshold of his heavenly home.

Among the persons who derived strength from Bradford's exhortations, were Farrer and Ridley, the Bishops of St David's and London. The former had consented to receive the communion only in one kind; and the other, when committed to the Tower, had gone to Mass there. He remonstrated with both, upon the evil effect of such examples, and both received his admonition in the same Christian spirit which had prompted it. Farrer was sent into his own diocese, and suffered at Caermarthen. He had such confidence in himself and his cause, that when one lamented the cruel manner of his death, he bade him give no credit to his doctrine, if he saw him once flinch in the flames; and in performance of that word he stood unmoved in the fire, till a wretch, impatient at beholding his patience, stunned him by a blow on the head. "Blessed be our heavenly Father," said Ridley, "for our dear and entirely beloved brother Bradford, whom now the Lord calleth for. . . . He hath holpen those which are gone before in their journey, that is, hath animated and encouraged them to keep the high-way, *et sic currere, uti tandem acciperent præmium*. The Lord be his comfort, whereof

I do not doubt; and I thank God heartily, that ever I was acquainted with him, and that ever I had such a one in my house." He blessed God also that Rogers, whom it had pleased God, out of gracious goodness and fatherly favour towards him, to set forth first, had also been one of his calling to the ministry, and of his preferring in St Paul's Church; and he expressed his trust that God would strengthen him to be the third martyr from that church in this time of persecution.

This excellent prelate, Nicholas Ridley, whose memory is without spot or stain, was descended from "a right worshipful stock" in Northumberland, and had been successively Master of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, Bishop of Rochester, and of London. He was a man of the kindest and gentlest disposition, which was manifested by his treatment of the Romanist Bishop Heath, when committed for twelve months to his custody; and by his conduct to Bonner's relations, when he succeeded to the See of London upon that prelate's deposition. The mother and sister of Bonner were entertained every day at his table with as much respect as if they had been his own kindred. How this was requited will hereafter be seen.

Ridley as well as Cranmer might have been proceeded against for treason, for he had preached, by order of the Council, in favour of the Lady Jane. But it was for the Mass that they were to suffer as conspicuous victims; and after one disputation at the Tower upon that question, they were sent to Oxford, and, with Latimer for their fellow-prisoner, confined in the common gaol, once well known by the name of Bocardo. The keeper's wife was so bigoted a Papist, that she believed every act of inhumanity towards them would be carried to the score of her good works; but in spite of her vigilance, they had faithful followers, by whose means they kept up an intercourse with those who were confined in London, and received from thence both money, food, and apparel; . . . strangers as well as friends contributing to them in their affliction. The person, whose means enabled her to assist the sufferers most largely, seems to have been the Lady Vane. Ridley, during his long confinement, wrote several epistles suited to the condition of his miserable country. He advised those who were not in captivity to fly, as the safest and wisest course; and in reply to those who were of opinion that the point of duty was to remain and suffer martyrdom, he observed, that in many things what is best for one at some times, is not best for all at all times. But as he prayed that every Christian brother or sister, "when brought

in to the wrestling place, might not shrink nor relent one inch, nor give back, whatsoever might befall, but stand to their tackle, and stick by it even unto death," so, he said, he dared not advise any of their own swing to start upon the stage, or cast themselves either before or further in danger, than time and need should require. It was better to fly; for they who remained must either bewray themselves, by breaking the Romish laws and customs; or break the law of God, and offend their own conscience, by disserving Him. What, then, should those persons do, who, because of age, infirmity, poverty, or the condition of their families, dependent wholly upon their exertions for support, found it utterly impossible to leave the country? "Alas," says Ridley, "what counsel is here to be given? O lamentable state! O sorrowful heart, that neither can depart, and without extreme danger and peril, is not able to tarry still! For these, alas! my heart mourneth the more, the less I am able to give any comfortable counsel, but this, . . . that always, as they look for everlasting life, they abide still in the confession of the truth, whatever might befall; and for the rest, to put their trust wholly in God, which is able to save them against all appearance." The sins of the nation, the hypocrisy and irreligion which had prevailed, had drawn this just visitation upon it; and he believed that, without doubt, the world was drawing towards its end.

He wrote also a letter of farewell to his relations and friends, and all his faithful countrymen: . . . an earnest and affectionate letter, wherein he charged them not to be abashed at the manner of his death: "Ye have rather cause to rejoice," said he, "if ye love me indeed, for that it hath pleased God to call me to a greater honour and dignity than ever I did enjoy before, either in Rochester or in the see of London, or should have had in the see of Durham, whereunto I was last of all elected and named. Yea, I count it greater honour before God, to die in his cause, (whereof I nothing doubt), than is in any earthly or temporal promotion." Then, as the recollection of his happier days arose, he passed into a strain of beautiful feeling: "Farewell, Cambridge, my loving mother and tender nurse! If I should not acknowledge thy manifold benefits, yea, if I should not, for thy benefits, at the least love thee again, truly I were to be accounted too ungrate and unkind. What benefits hadst thou ever, that thou usest to give and bestow upon thy best-beloved children, that thou thoughtest too good for me? . . . and of thy private commodities and emoluments in Colleges, what was it that thou madest me not partaker of? . . . I

thank thee, my loving mother, for all this thy kindness; and I pray God, that his laws, and the sincere Gospel of Christ, may ever be truly taught, and faithfully learned, in thee!"

"Farewell, Pembroke-Hall; of late, mine own College, my cure, and my charge! What case thou art in now, God knoweth: I know not well. Thou wast ever named, since I knew thee, to be studious, well-learned, and a great setter-forth of Christ's Gospel, and of God's true Word: so I found thee; and blessed be God, so I left thee, indeed. Woe is me, for thee, mine own dear College, if ever thou suffer thyself, by any means, to be brought from that trade! In thy orchard, . . . (the walls, butts, and trees, if they could speak, would bear me witness), I learned without book, almost all Paul's Epistles; yea, and I ween, all the canonical Epistles. Of which study, although in time a great part did depart from me, yet the sweet smell thereof, I trust, I shall carry with me into heaven: for the profit thereof, I think I have felt in all my lifetime ever after. . . . The Lord grant, that this zeal towards that part of God's Word, which is a key and true commentary to all the Holy Scriptures, may ever abide in that College, so long as the world shall endure!"

Then, after bidding adieu to Herne in East Kent, that "worshipful and wealthy parish," to which Cranmer had called him, as his first cure; to Canterbury Cathedral, whereof he had once been a member; and to Rochester, where he had been bishop; he addressed his late see, the metropolis: "O London, London, to whom now may I speak in thee, or whom shall I bid farewell? Shall I speak to the prebendaries of Paul's? Alas! all that loved God's Word, and were the true setters-forth thereof, are now, . . . some burnt and slain, some exiled and banished, and some holden in hard prison, and appointed daily to be put to most cruel death, for Christ's Gospel-sake. . . . As to my deposition and the spoil of my goods, I refer it unto God, which is a just judge; and I beseech God, that that, which is but my personal wrong, be not laid to thy charge in the latter day. . . . O thou now wicked and bloody See, why doest thou set up again the altars of Idolatry, which, by the Word of God, were justly taken away? Why hast thou overthrown the Lord's Table? Why dost thou daily delude the people? Why babblest thou the Common Prayer in a strange tongue? . . . Nay, hearken, thou whorish bawd of Babylon, thou wicked limb of Antichrist, thou bloody wolf, why slayest thou down and makest havoc of the prophets of God? Why murderest thou so cruelly Christ's poor silly sheep, which will not hear thy voice, because thou art

a stranger, and will follow none other but their own pastor, Christ? . . . Thinkest thou, that the Lord will not require the blood of his saints at thy hands? . . . Yet, O London, I may not leave thee thus!" . . . and then, passing into a strain more accordant to his mild and kindly temper, he remembered the many secret mourners in that city, who were groaning under the iniquity of the times; bestowed a noble eulogium upon the two mayors, Sir Richard Dobs and Sir George Barnes, who had so zealously co-operated with him in the establishment of the hospitals, and would have done so much more, had King Edward continued to reign; bade all the faithful citizens farewell; his fellow-sufferers, whether in prison, or in banishment, they were bearing witness to the truth; and, finally, the universal Church of Christ: . . . "Farewell, dear brethren, farewell; and let us comfort our hearts, in all troubles, and in death, with the word of God; for heaven and earth shall perish, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever!"

In this language did Ridley express his feelings, while he was looking forward to the stake. At length, White, Brooks, and Holyman, the Bishops of Lincoln, Gloucester, and Bristol, were sent to Oxford, as Commissioners from the Legate, Cardinal Pole, to ascite, judge, and condemn him and Latimer. Ridley was called for first, and appeared before them in the Divinity School: he stood bareheaded while the commission was being read; till hearing the Legate of the Pope named, he immediately put on his cap. The Bishop of Lincoln upon this told him, that unless he uncovered at the names of the Cardinal and Pope, they must order his cap to be taken off. Ridley replied, that he intended no contumacy toward them, nor any derogation toward the Lord Cardinal, whom, for his learning and virtue, as well as for his royal blood, he knew to be worthy of all humility, reverence, and honour: and with that he put off his cap and bowed his knee: "But in that he is Legate of the Pope," said he, covering his head as he spake, "whose usurped supremacy and abused authority I utterly renounce, I may in nowise give any obeisance unto him." The admonition was courteously repeated; and again with the like mild firmness answered Ridley, saying, they would do as they pleased in taking his cap off, and he should be content. A beadle was then ordered to pluck it off. His answer was then required to certain questions concerning the sacrament; in which he acknowledged a spiritual, but denied a corporal presence. They would not receive his protestation against their authority, as coming from the Pope; but he was told to answer

now, and on the morrow he might erase, add, and alter, what he would. When he requested they would suffer him to speak three words, White answered, that to-morrow he should speak forty; so having answered briefly to the articles, he was remanded, and Latimer was called in.

Latimer had been kept waiting during Ridley's examination. As soon as he entered, he said, "My lords, if I appear again, I pray you not to send for me until you be ready; for I am an old man, and it is a great hurt to mine old age to tarry so long gazing upon cold walls." He was, at this time, nearly seventy years of age, and had never recovered the hurt which he had received, when far advanced in life, by a tree falling upon him. He had suffered also in his health, from the inhumanity of the Lieutenant of the Tower, before his removal to Oxford. One day he sent this person word, that if he did not look better to him, he should, perchance, deceive him. The Lieutenant, thinking that he meant to escape, and had been simple enough to boast of it, came to him, and demanded what he meant? "You look, I think," said Latimer, "that I should be burnt; but, except you let me have some fire, I may deceive your expectation; for I am like to starve here for cold." His crazed body had not recovered from this winter's usage; and his appearance might have moved compassion, even in those who had not heard him preach before the Court, and known the reputation of the man, and his singular integrity and worth. He came hat in hand, with a kerchief bound round his head, and over it a night-cap or two, and a great cap, such as townsmen used in those days, with two broad flaps to button under the chin. His dress was a gown of Bristol frize, old and threadbare, fastened round the body with a penny leathern girdle; his Testament was suspended from this girdle by a leathern string; and his spectacles, without a case, were hanging from his neck upon his breast.

White, of Lincoln, began by exhorting him to return to the unity of the Church. Christ, he affirmed, had said to St Peter, *Rege oves meas*; words which implied pre-eminence and government, kings being called *Reges à regendo*; and that authority was inherited by the See of Rome. If he persisted in schism and heresy, they must then pronounce him a lost child, a son of perdition, a rotten member; and, as such, to be cut off. "Therefore, Master Latimer," said he, "for God's love, consider your estate! Remember, you are a learned man; you have taken degrees in the schools, borne the office of a Bishop: . . . remember you are an old man; spare your body, accelerate not your

death : . . . and especially remember your soul's health ; consider that, if you die in this state, you shall be a stinking sacrifice to God, for it is the cause that maketh the martyr, and not the death ; consider, that if you die in this state, you die without grace ; for without the Church can be no salvation. Let not vain-glory have the upper hand ; humiliate yourself, captivate your understanding, subdue your reason, submit yourself to the determination of the Church."

Latimer's reply to this was altogether characteristic. He took hold of the argument, that Christ had given a jurisdiction to St Peter, when he bade him *regere*, . . . govern his people. "The Bishops of Rome," he said, "have taken a new kind of *regere*. Indeed, they ought *regere* ; but how, my Lord ? Not as they will themselves : this *regere* must be hedged in and ditched in. They must *regere* ; but *secundum Verbum Dei* : they must rule ; but according to the Word of God." He then spake of a book, lately published, in which it was argued, that the clergy possessed the same authority as the Levites ; and where the Bible said, that the Levites, if there arose any controversy among the people, should decide the matter, *secundum legem Dei*, according to the law of God, . . . these words were left out, and the text was quoted as saying, that, as the priests should decide the matter, so it ought to be taken of the people. "A large authority, I ensure you !" said Latimer. "What gelding of Scripture is this ! What clipping of God's coin !" White replied, he knew nothing of the book : upon which Latimer told them, it was written by one who was now Bishop of Gloucester ; a person whom he did not know, nor had ever, to his knowledge, seen. This occasioned a laugh ; because that Bishop was one of his judges, and now rose up, saying, it was his book. "Was it yours, my Lord ?" quoth Latimer ; "indeed, I knew not your Lordship ; nor did I ever see you before, . . . neither yet see you now, through the brightness of the sun shining betwixt you and me." The audience, upon this, with a brutality, of which even educated men are capable, when they act in crowds, laughed again. "Why, my Masters," said the old man, "this is no laughing matter ! I answer upon life and death ! *Væ vobis qui ridetis nunc, quoniam flebitis !*" The Bishop defended his book, and said, "Master Latimer, hereby every man may see what learning you have !" "Lo," exclaimed the infirm old man, whose intellect and heart were still sound and vigorous as ever, "Lo, you look for learning at my hands, which have gone so long to the school of oblivion, making the bare walls my library ; . . .

keeping me so long in prison, without book, or pen and ink, . . . and now you let me loose, to come and answer to articles! You deal with me, as though two were appointed to fight for life and death; and over-night, the one, through friends and favour, is cherished, and hath good counsel given him, how to encounter with his enemy; the other, for envy, or lack of friends, all the whole night is set in the stocks. In the morning, when they shall meet, the one is in strength, and lusty; the other is stark of his limbs, and almost dead for feebleness. Think you, that to run through this man with a spear is not a goodly victory?"

When Latimer had answered to the articles, he prayed they would let him declare, in three words, why he refused the authority of the Pope. He was answered, as Ridley had been, that on the morrow he might speak forty. "Nay, my Lords," said he, "I beseech you, do with me now as it shall please your Lordships. I pray you, let me not be troubled to-morrow again. As for my part, I require no respite, for I am at a point." But they insisted that he should appear again, saying, they trusted God would work with him by the morrow; and thus he was remanded.

On the following day, the Session was held in St Mary's Church, which had been fitted up for the occasion, with a high throne for the Commissioners, trimmed with cloth of tissue and silk; at some distance from their feet, Ridley was set, at a framed table, which was covered with a silken cloth: the space wherein the table stood was compassed with seats for the heads of the University and their friends, and the body of the building crowded with spectators. After the bishops had in vain exhorted and entreated him to submit himself to the Church, he desired leave, as had been promised him, to state why he could not, in conscience, admit the authority of the Pope. White acknowledged, that when he had demanded leave to speak three words, he had promised to allow him forty; and that grant he said he would perform. Upon which Dr Weston, a man infamously conspicuous as one of the most active and willing agents in the Marian persecution, exclaimed, "Why, he hath spoken four hundred already!" Ridley confessed he had, but not upon that matter; and White then, . . . for now, not courtesy alone, but even the appearance of decent humanity, was laid aside, . . . bade him take his license, but keep to the number prescribed, which, he said, he would count upon his fingers; before Ridley had finished a sentence, the Romanists, who were sitting by, cried, that his number was out; and thus he was silenced.

White took God to witness, that he was sorry for him. "I believe it well, my Lord," replied Ridley, "forasmuch as it will one day be burdenous to your soul!" Sentence was then pronounced; after which, they excommunicated, and delivered him to the secular power. Latimer was next called in, and had as little liberty of speech allowed him. He appealed to the next General Council which should be truly called in God's name. White told him, it would be a long season before such a convocation as he meant would be called; and he was committed, in like manner, to the Mayor's custody, till the time of execution.

The ceremony of degradation was performed upon Ridley, at the mayor's house, by the Bishop of Gloucester, with the Vice-Chancellor, and the other Romanists, who now occupied all offices in the university. They threatened to gag him, when he declared that, as long as he had breath, he would speak against their abominable doings; and when they would have made him hold the chalice and the wafer-cake, he said he would not take them, but would let them fall: so that one of the attendants held them in his hand. This mockery being ended, Ridley would have discoursed with Brooks concerning it; but he was told, that being an excommunicated man, it was not lawful to converse with him. Brooks, however, promised to promote a supplication to the Queen, which the martyr read. It related to some tenants of the See of London, who had renewed their leases, while he was Bishop, upon fair terms, in customary form; but who were in danger of ruin, because Bonner would not allow of the renewal. He prayed that their leases might be held good, as conscience and equity required; or if this might not be, that out of the property which he had left at Fulham, they might be repaid such part of the fines as he had received; half his plate, he thought, might suffice for this. And he petitioned for his sister, whose husband Bonner had deprived of the provision which he had made for her and her family. The Archbishop of York, he said, who had lived with him more than a year, knew the circumstances, and would certify the Queen, that he petitioned for nothing but what was just and right.

When Ridley came to his sister's name in this supplication, his voice faltered, and for a little while, tears prevented him from proceeding. Recovering himself, he said, "This is nature that moveth me; but I have now done." The Bishop of Gloucester promised in conscience to further his request; but so far was Bonner from acknowledging the beneficence which Ridley had shewn to his mother and sister, that, not content with depriving

the martyred Bishop's brother-in-law of his means of subsistence, he threatened, in his brutal language, to make twelve god-fathers go upon him; and would have brought him to the stake, if Heath, in return for the kindness he had experienced from Ridley, had not interposed, and saved him.

On the following day, they were led to the place of execution, which was in a ditch opposite Balliol College. Lord Williams, of Thame, had been appointed to see it done, with a sufficient retinue, lest any tumult might be made in the hope of rescuing them. They embraced each other, knelt, each beside his stake, in prayer, and then conversed together, while the Lord Williams, and the other persons in authority, removed themselves out of the sun. These accursed sacrifices were always introduced by a sermon. A certain Dr Smith preached, taking for his text, "If I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it availeth me nothing;" from whence he drew conclusions, as uncharitable as ever were detorted from Scripture. Ridley desired leave to answer the sermon: he was told, that if he would recant his opinions, he should have his life, . . . otherwise he must suffer for his deserts; and the Vice-Chancellor, with some bailiffs as brutal as himself, stopped his mouth with their hands, after he had said, "So long as the breath is in my body, I will never deny my Lord Christ and his known truth. God's will be done in me!" Latimer said, he could answer the sermon well enough, if he might; and contented himself with exclaiming, "Well, there is nothing hid, but it shall be opened!" a saying from the Gospel which he frequently used. Ridley distributed such trifles as he had about him, to those who were near; and many pressed about him, to obtain something as a relic. They then undressed for the stake; and Latimer, when he had put off his prison-dress, remained in a shroud, which he had put on, instead of a shirt, for that day's office. Till then, his appearance had been that of a poor withered bent old man; but now, as if he had put off the burden of infirmity and age, "he stood bolt upright, as comely a father as one might lightly behold."

Then Ridley uttered this prayer: "Oh, Heavenly Father, I give unto thee most hearty thanks, for that thou hast called me to be a professor of thee, even unto death. I beseech thee, Lord God, take mercy upon this realm of England, and deliver the same from all her enemies!" After he had been chained to the stake, his brother-in-law, who, during the whole time of his imprisonment, had remained in Oxford, to serve him in whatever he could, tied a bag of gunpowder round his neck. Ridley being

told what it was, said, he received it as being sent of God ; and asking, if he had some for Latimer also, bade him give it in time, lest it should be too late. Meantime, he spake to Lord Williams, and entreated him to use his influence with the Queen, in behalf of his sister and the poor tenants ; this, he said, being the only thing, he blessed God, which troubled his conscience. When the fire was brought, Latimer said, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man ! We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out !" The venerable old man received the flame as if embracing it, and having, as it were, bathed his hands in the fire, and stroked his face with them, died presently, apparently without pain. Ridley endured a longer martyrdom ; till the gunpowder exploded, and then he fell at Latimer's feet. As the bodies were consumed, the quantity of blood which gushed from Latimer's heart astonished the beholders. It was observed the more, because he had continually prayed, during his imprisonment, that as God had appointed him to be a preacher of his Word, so also He would give him grace to stand to his doctrine until death, and shed his heart's blood for the same. His other prayers in prison were, that God of his mercy would restore his Gospel to this country once again, and that he would preserve the Lady Elizabeth, whom, in his prayers, says Fox, he was wont accustomably to name, and even with tears desired God to make her a comfort to this comfortless realm of England !

That prayer, Gardiner would have frustrated, if he could ; he used to say * it was in vain to strike the branches while the root was suffered to remain ; and proceeding upon that principle, he left no means untried for destroying the Lady Elizabeth. It was even said, that he had once despatched a writ for her execution. But the Queen, if she had little sense of natural humanity, had some consideration for public opinion ; and Philip also favoured the Lady Elizabeth. . . The Queen's was a precarious life, and, in case of her decease, a dispensation would gladly be granted for his marriage with her successor. Yet these remote and uncertain hopes might perhaps not have availed much longer, to save a life which was of such importance to the Protestant cause, if Gardiner had not now been summoned to his account. Fox has well characterised him as "toward his superiors flattering and fair spoken ; to his inferiors fierce ; against his equals stout and envious ; . . . neither true Protestant, nor right Papist ; neither constant in his error, nor yet steadfast in the truth ; neither

* Fuller, b. viii. p. 17.

friend to the Pope, and yet a perfect enemy to Christ; false in King Henry's time, a dissembler in King Edward's, double-perjured and a murderer in Queen Mary's." When in his last illness the Bishop of Chichester spoke to him of free justification through the merits of our Saviour, he exclaimed, "What, my Lord, will you open that gap? To me, and such as are in my case, you may speak it; but open this window to the people, and farewell all together!" Some of his last words were, "I have sinned with Peter, but I have not wept with Peter." The Romanists say that he died in sentiments of great repentance; . . . no man had more to repent of, nor has any man left a name more deservedly odious in English history.

It is certain that he had a fore-feeling of this; and that finding how little persecution availed, or rather that it strengthened the cause which it was intended to crush, he shrunk from the forward part which he had so long taken, and left Bonner to take upon himself more of the business and of the execrations which attended it. He had tried it upon a scale which would have satisfied even a Spanish Inquisitor. He had regarded neither learning nor ignorance, age nor youth, nor sex, nor condition. The details which have here been given, relate only to men conspicuous either in character or station; persons who were masters of the controversy, and pledged to the cause, who knew the importance of their example, and who had their intellectual strength, and the principle of honour, to aid the sense of religious duty. But the persecutors were not contented with these victims; they sent artificers and husbandmen, women and boys, to the stake. Father Persons, who had thoroughly imbibed the inhumanity of his Church, calls them a contemptible and pitiful rabblement, . . . obscure and unlearned fellows, fond and obstinate women, . . . abject and infamous. He praises the patience, longanimity, diligence, and charity of the bishops in seeking to reclaim them; and compassionates * the persecutors for having been "forced to punish so great a number of such a base quality, for such opinions as neither themselves could well understand, nor have any surer ground thereof than their own foolish apprehensions." But "what would our Saviour," he says, "have said of such pastors, if they had suffered such noisome wilful beasts to have lived freely among their flock, without restraint or punishment?" . . . "Artificers, craftsmen, spinsters, and like people," he says, "came to answer for themselves before their bishops, though never so ignorant or opposite among them-

* Three Conversions, vol. iii. p. 391.

selves, . . . yet every one would die for his opinions ; . . . no reason to the contrary, no persuasion, no argument, no inducements, no threats, no fair means, no foul, would serve, nor the present terror of fire itself ; . . . and the more the pastors entreated with them by any of the foresaid means, the worse they were. And will you doubt to call this wilful pertinacity, in the highest degree ? ”

The compassion which Father Persons expresses for the persecutors, is worthy of a writer low-minded enough to assert, and perhaps to believe, that the married clergy (specifying Rogers, Saunders, Taylor, and Hooper) “were drawn into heresy first and principally by the sensual bait of getting themselves women under the name of wives ;” . . . slanderous enough to affirm that * Cranmer, wherever he travelled, carried about a woman in a chest with him ; and inhuman enough to insult the memory of Ridley and Latimer, because they permitted † gunpowder to be placed about them at the stake ! His contemptuous remarks upon the condition of the martyrs, and their want of learning, produced a just and characteristic reply from Fuller. After reminding him that God sometimes chooseth the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, he ‡ says, “Always in time of persecution the Church is like a copse, which hath in it more underwood than oaks. For great men consult with their safety ; and whilst the poorer sort, as having little to lose, boldly embrace religion with both arms, the rich too often do only behold it at a distance with a smiling countenance, but dare not adventure to entertain it, except with very great secrecy.” It appears, indeed, that of all the persons who were enriched by the spoils of the religious houses, there was not one who suffered for his opinions during the persecution. They were made conformists by the Bull which confirmed to them the possession of the property they had acquired so ill.

Further, it is to be observed of the martyrs in humble life, that they suffered not for obtruding their belief, but for refusing

* *Three Conversions*, vol. ii. p. 371.

† “They were both burned together,” he says, “each of them taking gunpowder to despatch himself, which yet is not read to have been practised by old martyrs. It seemeth that these men would have the fame of martyrdom without the pain ; and now they have incurred the everlasting pain, if by their end we may judge.”—*Three Conversions*, vol. iii. p. 231. The same reproach was made by Dormau, a Romanist, who was present at their martyrdom, and rejoiced in it.

Dean Noel answered this man's writings, and said upon this point: “Why may you devise means of long afflicting and tormenting innocent and true Christians (as the Papists did by slack and lingering fire made of green fuel, as in many places was done) ; and why may not they accept speedy means offered to them, whereby they might the sooner be rid from such tyrants as you are, and be with Christ ?” —*Strype's Memorials*, vol. iv., p. 402. (Bagster's edition).

‡ *Church History*, b. viii. p. 25.

to renounce it ; they continued modestly in their station, “ none presuming to invade the ministerial function, nor adventuring to preach, save only that their real sermon of patience at their* death.” Nor was it for vain and presumptuous speculations, nor for opinions which endanger the foundations of society, that they were called in question : the sacrament of the altar was the touchstone. “ Many, indeed,” says † Fuller, “ are the differences betwixt us and the Romish Church, but on this point the examiners pinched most. Haply because in other controversies, Protestants (hunted after by these bloodhounds) might take covert under some tolerable distinction, and thereby evade the danger : whereas this point of the real, corporal presence of Christ in the sacrament, the selfsame body that was crucified, was such downright falsehood, it was incapable of any palliation, and was the compendious way to discover those of the contrary opinion. This *neck-question* (as I may term it), the most dull and duncical commissioner was able to ask ; and, thanks be to God, the silliest Protestant soul brought before them, was able to answer, first by denying it, then by dying in the defence of his denial.” We can die for Christ, not dispute for him, said a woman who died a martyr for this truth. “ If,” says Baxter, ‡ “ you are but sure you know *bread* and *wine*, when you *see* and *feel*, and *smell* and *taste* them, then you are at the end of controversy with the Papists.”

Two leaders in this noble army of martyrs had been reserved till after Gardiner's death, Philpot and Cranmer ; the latter was the especial object of the Queen's vengeance ; the former the persecutors seem to have been more than usually desirous of converting, perhaps because of his connexions, his abilities, and his temper, which, if he had joined their party, would have made him active in it. He was the son of a Hampshire knight, and had been bred at New College, where, while studying the civil law, he had made himself a proficient in Hebrew. Having improved his mind by travelling, he entered into holy orders on his return, and was made Archdeacon of Winchester. At the commencement of this bloody reign, he was one of the six clergy who opposed, in convocation, the restoration of Popery, and he was the most ardent of them. His foresight of the horrors which would ensue, made him burst into tears ; he challenged the Romanists to dispute with him upon the question of Transubstantiation, and if he did not confound any six of them on that point, “ let me be burnt before the court-gates,” said he,

* Fuller, b. viii. p. 25. † Ibid. p. 21. ‡ A Saint or a Brute· Epistle Dedicatory.

"with as many faggots as be in London!" But though in that convocation it was lawful for him to speak his opinion fully, the faith which he professed being at that time the established faith, and liberty, moreover, having been given, in the name of the Queen and Council, for every one to speak freely, Philpot was called before Gardiner as his ordinary on that account, and put in confinement, on suspicion of having published the report of the disputation.

After Ridley and Latimer had suffered, he was brought before the commissioners at Newgate, one of whom, Dr Story, remarked to him, "that he was well fed." He replied, "If I be fat and in good liking, Mr Doctor, it is no marvel, since I have been stalled up in prison this twelvemonth and a-half, in a close corner." Saying then that he had broken no law in delivering his mind freely, when and where he was called upon and authorised so to do; he expressed a hope that Story, for old acquaintance in Oxford, would shew him some friendship, and not extremity. Story answered, "If thou wouldest be a good Catholic, I would be thy friend, and spend my gown to do thee good; but I will be no friend to an heretic as thou art, but spend both gown and coat but I will burn thee." And, declaring that he would sweep the prisons of these heretics, he ordered him to the Bishop's coal-house.

In a little dark prison adjoining this coal-house, Philpot found two persons in the stocks; one of them, Whittle by name, was a married priest, who, after a painful imprisonment, had consented to sign a recantation in Bonner's register. Unable to rest after having done this, he presented himself again, desired to see the bill, and tore it in pieces, for which Bonner beat him violently, plucked out part of his beard, and set him in the stocks, till he could be sent in due form to the stake, where, with six companions in martyrdom, two of whom were women, he afterwards suffered bravely. Bonner put on an appearance of unusual courtesy towards Philpot; he sent food to him and his fellows, and affected displeasure that he should be troubled with persons who did not belong to his diocese. And when Philpot was brought before him, he accosted him with apparent good will, and said, "Give me your hand," which Philpot kissed and presented. The Bishop soon came to the point, and demanded what was his judgment concerning the sacrament? Philpot answered in the words of St Ambrose to Valentinian, *Tolle legem, et fiet certamen*, "Take away the law, and I shall reason with you. . . . I cannot shew you my mind, but I must run upon the

pikes in danger of my life therefore. And yet, if I come in open judgment, where I am bound by the law to answer, I trust I shall utter my conscience as freely as any that hath come before you." Bonner ended the examination, by saying he should be glad to do him any good if he could; and, ordering him to the cellar to drink a cup of wine, he was then remanded to the coal-house, "Where," said he, "I, with my six fellows, do rouse together in straw as cheerfully, we thank God, as others do on their beds of down."

In a subsequent examination, at which several bishops were present, Story reviled him for an ignorant, fantastical, and beastly heretic, who purposed to be a stinking martyr. "These heretics," said he, "be worse than brute beasts; for they will, upon a vain singularity, take upon them to be wiser than all men, being, indeed, very fools and ass-heads, not able to maintain that which of an ignorant obstinacy they do stand in. . . . Well, sir, you are like to go after your father Latimer, the sophister, and Ridley, who had nothing to allege for himself, but that he had learned his heresy of Cranmer. When I came to him he trembled as though he had had the palsy. These heretics have always some token of fear whereby a man may know them, as you may see this man's eyes do tremble in his head. But I despatched them! and I tell thee that there hath been yet never a one burnt, but I have spoken with him, and have been a cause of his despatch." Philpot replied, "You have the more to answer for, Mr Doctor!" Story then departed, saying, his coming was to signify to the Bishop that he must out of hand rid this heretic out of the way; and, turning to Philpot, he added, "I certify thee that thou mayest thank no other man but me." As the prisoner was on the way back to his miserable lodging, Bonner said to him, "Philpot, if there be any pleasure I may shew you in my house, I pray you require it, and you shall have it." "My lord," he replied, "the pleasure that I will require of your lordship, is to hasten my judgment which is committed unto you, and to despatch me forth of this miserable world, unto my eternal rest." Notwithstanding these fair words on Bonner's part, the prisoner was left to lie upon straw in his coal-house, without fire or candle, in the month of November.

The Lords of the Council were present at the next examination; one of whom, Lord Rich, asked him if he were of the Philpots of Hampshire? and being told that he was Sir P. Philpot's son, acknowledged him for his near kinsman, and said

he would go an hundred miles barefooted to do him good. Philpot thanked him for challenging kindred of a poor prisoner: and Rich offered that ten learned men should be brought to reason with him, and twenty or forty of the nobility to hear, if he would promise to abide by their judgment. He replied, that unless he were sure they would judge according to the Word of God, he could not do this. By the Word he would be tried, and by such as would judge according to it. "For example," said he, "if there were a controversy between your lordship and another, upon the words of a statute, must not the words of the statute determine the point?" "No, marry," replied Rich, "the judges of the law may determine of the meaning thereof." Bonner exclaimed, "He hath brought as good an example against himself as can be;" and the lords all declared he had overthrown himself by his own argument. "If it be pondered thoroughly," rejoined Philpot, "it maketh wholly with me, and nothing against me, as my Lord of London hath pretended. For I will ask of my Lord Rich here, whom I know to have good knowledge in the laws and statutes of this realm, albeit a judge may discern the meaning of a statute agreeable to the words, whether he may judge a meaning contrary to the express words, or no?" Rich made answer, "He cannot do so." "Even so," quoth the martyr, "say I; that no man ought to judge the Word of God to have a meaning contrary to the express words thereof, as this false Church of Rome doth in many things."

After further debate upon the corporal presence, the lords refreshed themselves with drinking, and Rich had the humanity to give his kinsman a cup: . . . "God requite it him," says Philpot, "for I was athirst indeed." Dr Chedsey attacked him then, and began by saying, that in the Convocation he had been so put to silence by his opponents, that he fell to weeping, because he had nothing further to say. "That I wept," replied Philpot, "was not for lack of matter, as you slander me; for I thank God, I have more matter than the best of you all shall ever be able to answer, as little learning as I have: but my weeping was as Christ's was upon Jerusalem, seeing the destruction that should fall upon her. And I, foreseeing then the destruction which you, through violence and unrighteousness which you then declared, would work against the true Church of Christ and her faithful members (as this day beareth witness), was compelled to weep in remembrance of that which I, with infinitely more, have felt, and shall feel." It was in vain for him to protest that he thought most reverently of the sacrament,

and believed it to be one of the greatest treasures and comforts that Christ had left us on earth. The point of Transubstantiation was insisted on; and Bonner, after a train of reasoning too gross and despicable to be repeated, broke up the sitting, saying he would trouble their lordships no longer with this obstinate man, with whom they could do no good.

After this, Bonner displayed himself in his natural character. When he summoned him again, he addressed him with, "Sirrah, come hither!" called him a fool, and a very ignorant fool, and said, "By my faith, thou art too well handled; thou shalt be worse handled hereafter, I warrant thee!" "If to be in a blind coal-house, both without fire and candle, may be counted good handling," replied Philpot, "then may it be said I am well handled. Your lordship hath power to entreat my body as you list." "You think," quoth Bonner, "because my Lord Chancellor is gone, that we will burn no more; yet, I warrant thee, I will despatch you shortly, unless you do recant." Philpot coolly replied, "My lord, I had not thought that I should have been alive now, neither so raw as I am, but well roasted to ashes!" Bonner then read the libel against him, to which Philpot, in the first instance, objected upon legal grounds, as stating falsely that he was of Bonner's diocese. "What," said Bonner, "art thou not of my diocese? Where are ye now, I pray you?" Philpot answered, "I cannot deny but I am in your coal-house; yet I am not of your diocese. I was brought hither by violence; and therefore my being here is not sufficient to abridge me of mine own ordinary's jurisdiction." But in these iniquitous proceedings it availed the martyr as little to plead Law as Gospel.

The libel charged him with denying baptism to be necessary; denying fasting, prayer, and all good works; teaching that faith was sufficient, whatever a man's actions might be; and that God was the author of all sin and wickedness. "Is not your lordship ashamed," said Philpot, "to say that I maintain these abominable blasphemies? which, if I did maintain, I were well worthy to be counted an heretic, and to be burnt an hundred times, if it were possible!" He was now frequently set in the stocks at night, and being more narrowly watched and searched, was prevented at length from recording the proceedings. They ended as usual, in delivering him over to the secular arm; and he* suffered in Smithfield, manifesting to the last the same brave

* "Of all the Marian martyrs," says Fuller, "Mr Philpot was the best born gentleman; Bishop Ridley the profoundest scholar; Mr Bradford the holiest and devoutest man; Archbishop Cranmer of the mildest and meekest temper; Bishop Hooper of the sternest and austere nature; Dr Taylor had the

heart, collected mind, and firm faith, which he had shewn in all his trials.

It is probable that Philpot, and some of his fellow-martyrs, were detained so long in prison before any further steps were taken against them, in a hope that the continual apprehension of the dreadful fate, which nothing but their recantation could avert, might exhaust their spirits, and fear, acting upon a debilitated frame, produce what never could have been effected by reasoning. But this motive could not have operated in Cranmer's case; the determination had been taken that no mercy, under any circumstances, should be extended to him; and it seems, therefore, he had been kept alive thus long, that he might taste the bitterness of death in every separate martyrdom of his friends, before he himself was called for. The Romanists hated him, as the person by whom, more than by any other single hand, the Reformation in this country had been conducted. In what manner the Protestants regarded him, was strikingly expressed by Ridley; "The integrity and uprightness of that man," said he, "his gravity and innocence, all England, I think, hath known long ago. Blessed be God, therefore, which, in such abundance of iniquity, and decay of all godliness, hath given unto us, in this reverend old age, such a witness for the truth of his Gospel. Miserable and hard-hearted is he, whom the godliness and constant confession of so worthy, so grave and innocent a man, will not move to acknowledge, and confess, the truth of God!"

As soon as Cranmer perceived what course events were likely to take after King Edward's death, he gave orders that all his debts should be paid, to the uttermost farthing, and cancelled the bills which were due to him from persons who were not in a condition to discharge them. This being done, he said he was his own man, and with God's help, able to answer all the world, and all worldly adversities. Those adversities soon came upon him: he was attainted of treason, and adjudged guilty of it. Upon this point, he knew that he had offended, and solicited pardon; protesting, that he had opposed the late King's intention of altering the succession, and had only been induced to sign the will by the King's earnest request, and the opinion of the judges. The pardon was granted; not as an act of mercy, for Mary and her counsellors never acted under that impulse; but that he might be proceeded against as a heretic, and con-

merriest and pleasantest wit; Mr Lati-
mer had the plainest and simplest heart.
Oh the variety of these several instru-
ments! Oh their joint harmony in
a concert to God's glory!"—B. viii. p.
21.

demned to a more cruel and ignominious death. He attempted to obtain a hearing from the Queen, that he might explain to her upon what grounds her father and her brother had altered the religion of the country. It lay not in him, he said, nor in any private subject, to reform things ; but quietly to suffer what they could not amend. Yet he thought it his duty, considering what place he once bore, and knowing what he did, and having borne a great part in all the alterations, to shew the Queen his mind ; and when he had done this, he should think himself discharged. If this request had been granted, it would have produced no effect. But, after his removal to Oxford, he, with Ridley and Latimer, was brought forward in St Mary's, to hold a disputation with the Romanists, . . . that the latter might adjudge the victory to themselves. When this was over, they were condemned as heretics ; from which sentence Cranmer appealed to the just judgment of the Almighty.

But because the kingdom had not, at that time, been reconciled to the Pope, he was to be tried and sentenced upon a new Commission. Accordingly he was arraigned for blasphemy, incontineny, and heresy, before the same Commissioners who condemned his fellow-prisoners : upon which occasion, vailing his cap, like them, to the Queen's representatives, he covered himself when he looked at the Pope's delegate. Brooks opened the proceedings with a speech, in which he reminded the Archbishop of the low origin from which he had risen, and the high degree whence he had fallen, lower and lower, and now to the lowest degree of all, . . . to the end of honour and life. "If the light of your candle," said he, "be dusky, your candlestick is like to be removed, and have a great fall ; so low, that it be quite out of God's favour, and past all hope of recovery : for in hell is no redemption. The danger whereof being so great, very pity causeth me to say, Remember from whence thou hast fallen ! . . . I add also, and whither you fall !" He then exhorted him to renounce his errors, assuring him, that he had been spared for his treason, in hope of his amendment ; and that, if he were converted, it was ten to one that though he had been Metropolitan of England, he should be as well still, and rather better.

Cranmer maintained his cause with his wonted learning and gentleness, and with that superiority which the cause itself gave him. When he acknowledged his marriage, one of the Commissioners observed, that his children then were bondmen to the See of Canterbury. He smiled at this, and asked whether, if a priest kept a concubine, their issue were bondmen ? adding, "I trust

you will make my children's case no worse." Depositions concerning the doctrines he had preached were taken against him, and he was then cited to appear at Rome in person within eighty days, there to make his answer. This, he said, he would be content to do, if the Queen would send him: . . . but this was a mere form and mockery, for he was detained in strait prison; and, at the end of the term, declared contumacious for not appearing, and as such condemned. They did not even wait till the term was expired before they degraded him. Thirlby and Bonner were commissioned to perform this ceremony. The former had been his old and familiar friend, and had received many and great kindnesses from his hands: his tears and his emotions shewed that he remembered this. But Bonner officiated with characteristic insolence. That the mockery might be more insulting, the vestments were made of rags and canvas. In this plight, with a mock mitre and pall, and a crosier in his hand, he was exhibited in St Mary's, while the brutal Bonner exclaimed, "This is the man that hath despised the Pope, and now is to be judged by him! This is the man that hath pulled down so many churches, and now is come to be judged in a church! This is the man that contemned the blessed sacrament, and now is come to be condemned before that sacrament!" And in this strain he went on, though Thirlby repeatedly pulled him by the sleeve, to make him desist, and had obtained a promise from him to use Cranmer with reverence. The Archbishop submitted calmly to all, saying, he had done with this gear long ago; but he held the crosier fast; and instead of yielding it, delivered a paper, containing his appeal to a General Council. He was then dressed in a yeoman's threadbare gown and a townsman's cap, and sent back to prison.

He was now dealt with very differently from any of the former sufferers; for he was removed to the house of the Dean of Christ Church, and treated there, rather as a guest than a prisoner, with every possible indulgence, and with every mark of real, or pretended, regard; some, perhaps, acting from sincere attachment to him, others in the hope of prevailing upon a mind which was naturally timid. That they succeeded, is certain; but it is doubtful to what extent. The probability is, that he signed an equivocal recantation; and that the other papers, five in number, wherein he was made to acknowledge, in the most explicit terms, the doctrines which he had repeatedly confuted, and to vilify himself as a mischief-maker and blasphemer, were fabricated by Bonner's directions. The circumstances are alto-

gether suspicious, as well as perplexed; and nothing appears certain, but that he submitted, under a promise that his life should be spared, and that he should pass it; if he did not wish for wealth or dignity, in a private station, and wherever he listed. That, after this, it should have been determined, not only to put him to death, but to make him suffer the extreme rigour of their accursed laws, and burn him alive, was a cruelty beyond that of the Inquisition itself; the victims of that tribunal, who suffered as confessing and repenting of their opinions, being always strangled before they were burnt. This cruelty is imputed to the Queen's implacable resentment against him, for the part which he had taken in her mother's divorce: but in this, as in all the cruelties of this inhuman reign, Cardinal Pole is implicated; his principle was, that no thieves, no murderers, were so pernicious to the commonwealth as the heretics; that no treason was to be compared to theirs, and that they were to be rooted up, like brambles and briars, and cast into the fire. No persecution was ever begun with a more determined resolution of going through with it: upon this subject there was no vacillation in the Queen's counsels. But in the case of Cranmer, the object of persecution had been obtained, and the plainest policy was disregarded, for the sake of gratifying a vindictive temper. Never did malice more signally confound itself.

It appears that Cranmer was not informed of the determination concerning him, even on the morning when he was to suffer; but many circumstances made him apprehend that his death was intended, and he had prepared accordingly. About nine in the morning he was taken from Bocardo to St Mary's Church, where the sermon, which would otherwise have been preached at the place of execution, was to be delivered, because it was a day of heavy rain. The Mayor and Aldermen went first, then Cranmer between two friars, who chanted psalms as they went, till they came to the church door; there they began the *Nunc Dimittis*, and then brought him to a stage in front of the pulpit, raised at such a height from the ground that all the assembly might see him. The Lord Williams, and the other persons of authority who had been ordered to attend the execution, were present with their armed retinue, and the church was crowded, . . . the Romanists coming in the hope that Cranmer would proclaim his own conversion to their doctrines; they who were Protestants at heart, in the better belief, that "he who, by continual study and labour for so many years, had set forth the doctrine of the Gospel, would not, in the last act of his life, forsake his post."

A Romanist, who was present, and who thought that his former life and wretched end deserved a greater misery, if greater had been possible, was yet, in spite of his heart-hardening opinions, touched with compassion at beholding him in a bare and ragged gown, and ill-favouredly clothed with an old square cap, exposed to the contempt of all men. "I think," said he, "there was none that pitied not his case, and bewailed not his fortune, and feared not his own chance, to see so noble a prelate, so grave a counsellor, of so long-continued honour, after so many dignities, in his old years to be deprived of his estate, adjudged to die, and in so painful a death to end his life." When he had ascended the stage, he knelt and prayed, weeping so profusely, that many, even of the Papists, were moved to tears.

Cole, who preached the sermon, began by dwelling upon the mercy of God, and from that theme, with the preposterous logic of his Church, proceeded to shew how necessary it was, for that justice by which the Almighty's mercy is tempered, that Cranmer should be burnt alive. The Queen and Council had thus determined, notwithstanding pardon and reconciliation were due to him according to the canons, for three especial reasons: first, for the part he had taken in the divorce; secondly, because he had been the author and only fountain of those heretical doctrines which had so long prevailed; and thirdly, because "it seemed meet, that as the death of Northumberland made even with Sir Thomas More, so there should be one that should make even with Fisher of Rochester; and because Ridley, Hooper, and Farrer were not sufficient, it seemed that Cranmer should be joined to them to fill up this part of equality." He exhorted the auditors to note by this example, that the Queen would spare no man in this cause, whatever might be his rank or character. Finally, he comforted Cranmer, exhorted him to take his death patiently, and promised him, in the name of all the clergy present, that, immediately after his death, dirges, masses, and funeral service, should be performed in all the churches of Oxford, for the succour of his soul.

"Cranmer in all this meantime" (they are the words of good John Fox), "with what great grief of mind he stood hearing this sermon, the outward shows of his body and countenance did better express, than any man can declare: one while lifting up his hands and eyes unto heaven, and then again for shame letting them down to the earth. A man might have seen the very image and shape of perfect sorrow lively in him expressed. More than twenty several times the tears gushed out abundantly, dropping

down from his fatherly face. Those which were present testify that they never saw, in any child, more tears than brast out from him at that time. It is marvellous what commiseration and pity moved all men's hearts that beheld so heavy a countenance, and such abundance of tears, in an old man of so reverend dignity." Withal he ever retained "a quiet and grave behaviour." In this hour of utter humiliation and severe repentance, he possessed his soul in patience. Never had his mind been more clear and collected, never had his heart been so strong.

When the sermon was ended, the preacher desired all the people to pray for the sufferer. They knelt accordingly, and Cranmer knelt with them, praying fervently for himself. "I think," says the Catholic spectator, "there was never such a number so earnestly praying together. For they that hated him before, now loved him for his conversion and hope of continuance. They that loved him before, could not suddenly hate him, having hope of his confession again of his fall. So love and hope increased devotion on every side." Cole then addressed them, saying, "Brethren, lest any one should doubt of this man's earnest conversion and repentance, you shall hear him speak before you; and therefore I pray you, Master Cranmer, that you will now perform that you promised not long ago; namely, that you would openly express the true and undoubted profession of your faith, that you may take away all suspicion from men, and that all men may understand you are a Catholic indeed." "I will do it," replied Cranmer, "and that with a good will."

He rose then from his knees, and, putting off his cap, said, "Good Christian people, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, I beseech you most heartily to pray for me to Almighty God, that he will forgive me my sins and offences, which be many without number, and great above measure. But among all the rest, there is one which grieveth my conscience most of all, whereof you shall hear more in its proper place." Then, drawing forth from his bosom a prayer which he had prepared for this occasion, he knelt and said, "O Father of Heaven! O Son of God, Redeemer of the world! O Holy Ghost, three Persons in one God! have mercy upon me, most wretched caitiff and miserable sinner! I have offended both against heaven and earth, more than my tongue can express; whither then may I go, or whither shall I flee? To heaven I may be ashamed to lift up mine eyes; and in earth I find no place of refuge or succour. To Thee, therefore, O Lord, do I run; to Thee do I humble myself, saying, O Lord my God, my sins be great, but yet have

mercy upon me for thy great mercy! The great mystery that God became man, was not wrought for little or few offences. Thou didst not give thy Son, O heavenly Father, unto death for small sins only, but for all the greatest sins of the world, so that the sinner return to thee with his whole heart, as I do here at this present. Wherefore have mercy on me, O God, whose property is always to have mercy! have mercy upon me, O Lord, for thy great mercy! I crave nothing for mine own merits, but for thy name-sake, that it may be hallowed thereby, and for thy dear Son Jesus Christ's sake. And now, therefore, Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name!"

No prayer had ever been composed and uttered in deeper misery, nor with more earnest and devout contrition. Rising then, he addressed the spectators, not hurrying impatiently to his purpose, but calmly and deliberately. "Every man, good people," said he, "desireth at the time of his death, to give some good exhortation, that others may remember the same, and be the better thereby: so I beseech God grant me grace that I may speak something at this my departing, whereby God may be glorified, and you edified." He exhorted them not to set their minds overmuch upon this glozing world, but upon the world to come; and to obey the King and Queen willingly and gladly, not for fear of men only, but much more for the fear of God, knowing that they be God's ministers, appointed to rule and govern, and therefore whosoever resisteth them, resisteth the ordinance of God. And he entreated them to love one another. "Bear well away," said he, "this one lesson, to do good unto all men as much as in you lieth; and to hurt no man, no more than you would hurt your own natural loving brother or sister. For this you may be sure of, that whosoever hateth any person, and goeth about maliciously to hinder or hurt him, . . . surely, and without all doubt, God is not with that man, although he think himself never so much in God's favour." Lastly, he exhorted the rich to make a proper use of the wealth with which they were intrusted.

Well aware how little he should be allowed to speak when he came to the point, he still proceeded with a caution which it would have been impossible to have observed thus to the last, if he had not attained to the most perfect self-possession in this trying hour. "And now," he pursued, "forasmuch as I am come to the last end of my life, whereupon hangeth all my life past, and all my life to come, either to live with my Master Christ for ever in joy, or else to be in pain for ever with wicked

devils in hell (and I see before mine eyes presently either heaven ready to receive me, or else hell ready to swallow me up!) I shall therefore declare unto you my very faith, how I believe, without any colour of dissimulation; for now is no time to dissemble, whatsoever I have said or written in times past." He then repeated the Apostles' Creed, and declared his belief in every article of the Catholic faith, every word and sentence taught by our Saviour, his Apostles, and Prophets, and in the New and Old Testament.

"And now," he continued, "I come to the great thing which troubleth my conscience more than anything that ever I said or did in my whole life, and that is, the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth; which now here I renounce and refuse as things written with my hand, contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death, and to save my life, if it might be; and that is, all such bills and papers as I have written or signed with my hand since my degradation, wherein I have written many things untrue. And forasmuch as my hand offended, writing contrary to my heart, my hand shall first be punished therefore; for may I come to the fire, it shall be first burnt!" He had time to add, "As for the Pope, I refuse him as Antichrist; and as for the sacrament, I believe as I have taught in my book against the Bishop of Winchester, the which my book teacheth so true a doctrine of the sacrament, that it shall stand at the last day before the judgment of God, when the papistical doctrine, contrary thereto, shall be ashamed to shew her face." The Papists were at first too much astonished to interrupt him. Lord Williams bade him remember himself, and play the Christian man; he answered, that he did so, for now he spake truth: and when he was reproached for falsehood and dissimulation, the meek martyr made answer, "Ah, my masters, do not you take it so! Always hitherto I have been a hater of falsehood, and a lover of simplicity, and never before this time have I dissembled!" and with that he wept again. But when he would have spoken more, the Romanists made an uproar, and Cole cried from the pulpit, "Stop the heretic's mouth, and take him away!"

Cranmer was now pulled down from the stage, and carried to the stake, surrounded by priests and friars, who, with promises of heaven and threats of everlasting torments, called upon him to renounce errors by which he would otherwise draw innumerable souls into hell with him. They brought him to the spot where Latimer and Ridley had suffered. He had overcome the

weakness of his nature; and, after a short prayer, put off his clothes with a cheerful countenance and willing mind, and stood upright in his shirt, which came down to his feet. His feet were bare; his head, when both his caps were off, appeared perfectly bald, but his beard was long and thick, and his countenance so venerable, that it moved even his enemies to compassion. Two Spanish friars, who had been chiefly instrumental in obtaining his recantation, continued to exhort him; till, perceiving that their efforts were vain, one of them said, Let us leave him, for the devil is with him! Ely, who was afterwards President of St John's, still continued urging him to repentance. Cranmer replied, he repented his recantation; and in the spirit of charity offered his hand to Ely, as to others, when he bade him farewell; but the obdurate bigot drew back, and reproved those who had accepted such a farewell, telling them it was not lawful to act thus with one who had relapsed into heresy. Once more he called upon him to stand to his recantation. Cranmer stretched forth his right arm, and replied, "This is the hand that wrote it, and therefore it shall suffer punishment first."

True to this purpose, as soon as the flame arose, he held his hand out to meet it, and retained it there steadfastly, so that all the people saw it sensibly burning before the fire reached any other part of his body; and often he repeated with a loud and firm voice, "This hand hath offended! this unworthy right hand!" Never did martyr endure the fire with more invincible resolution; no cry was heard from him, save the exclamation of the protomartyr Stephen, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! He stood immoveable as the stake to which he was bound, his countenance raised, looking to heaven, and anticipating that rest into which he was about to enter; and thus, "in the greatness of the flame," he yielded up his spirit. The fire did its work soon, . . . and his heart was found unconsumed amid the ashes.

Of all the martyrdoms during this great persecution, this was in all its circumstances the most injurious to the Romish cause. It was a manifestation of inveterate and deadly malice toward one who had borne his elevation with almost unexampled meekness. It effectually disproved the argument on which the Romanists rested, that the constancy of our martyrs proceeded not from confidence in their faith, and the strength which they derived therefrom; but from vain-glory, the pride of consistency, and the shame of retracting what they had so long professed. Such deceitful reasoning could have no place here: Cranmer had retracted; and the sincerity of his contrition for that sin was

too plain to be denied, too public to be concealed, too memorable ever to be forgotten. The agony of his repentance had been seen by thousands; and tens of thousands had witnessed how, when that agony was past, he stood calm and immoveable amid the flames; a patient and willing holocaust; triumphant, not over his persecutors alone, but over himself, over the mind as well as the body, over fear and weakness, as well as death.

The persecution continued with unabated rigour during the whole of this abominable reign; and the consequence was, that as the havoc which had been committed under pretext of the Reformation, made the people rejoice in the re-establishment of Popery, so Popery was by these cruelties rendered an object of horror and hatred to the nation. Persons, whom neither books nor sermons would have reached, were converted to the Protestant faith by the constancy with which the martyrs suffered: . . . a subject to which they would otherwise have remained indifferent, was forced upon their thoughts, and they felt that the principle could be of no light importance for which so many laid down their lives. The sight of Latimer's and Ridley's death produced such an effect upon Julius Palmer, who in Edward's reign had been expelled from Magdalen College as an obstinate Romanist, that he could not rest till he had searched the Scriptures to ascertain what were the grounds of the faith for which they suffered, and then openly professed it himself. "Thou art stout now and hardy in thine opinion," said one of his fellow-collegians, as they sate at table together, "but if thou wert brought to the stake thou wouldest tell another tale. I advise thee beware of the fire! it is a shrewd matter to burn." "Truly," said Palmer, "I have been in danger of burning once or twice, and hitherto, thank God, I have escaped it; but I judge verily it will be my end at last; welcome be it! It is a hard matter for them to burn, that have the mind and soul linked to the body, as a thief's foot is tied in fetters: but if a man be once able, through the help of God's Spirit, to separate and divide the soul from the body, for him it is no more mastery to burn, than for me to eat this bread." Nor was this a vain confidence, for in the same spirit he suffered at the stake.

The sight of the Papists' cruelty in like manner made George Tankerfield misdoubt their conduct first, and then abhor it. He was sent to St Alban's, there to be burnt in a field at the west end of the abbey. His execution was delayed till the afternoon, while the Sheriffs were at a marriage-feast! He meantime observed, that

Although the day be never so long,
At last it ringeth to even-song.

And he tried the fire in his chamber with his foot, to prove how the flesh could support it. When he came to the stake, the Mayor said that if he had but one load of faggots in the world, he would give them to burn this heretic. A knight who was present took him by the hand, and said, in a low tone of voice, "Good brother, be strong in Christ!" The martyr replied, "O Sir, I thank you! I am so, I thank God." And when the flames arose, he moved his arms as if he were bathing in them, and embracing his death; so that some of the more obdurate spectators observed, the devil was so strong in him, and in all such, that they could feel no pain.

Those whose hearts were too hard to comprehend a worthier reason, might well entertain this notion, so marvellous was the fortitude which the martyrs displayed. Sometimes they promised their friends that they would lift up their arms in the fire, and clap their hands, in token that the mind could be kept quiet and patient through their torments; and they * failed not to give this promised assurance of triumphant faith. A young man who was martyred at Canterbury, George Roper was his name, extended his arms like an image on the cross, when the pile was kindled, and in that attitude held them till the last. Rawlins White, a poor Welsh fisherman, bow-bent with the infirmities of age, stood bolt upright when he approached the stake, as if he had already cast off the burthen of years. "I feel a fighting between the flesh and the spirit," said he to one of his friends; "and the flesh would very fain have his sway. Therefore, I pray you, if you see me anything tempted, hold your finger up, and

* Robert Smith, one of the martyrs here alluded to, wrote several poems in prison. The following lines from that which he addressed to his children, are well worthy of preservation, the circumstances under which they were written giving them a deep interest:—

—That ye may follow me, your father and your friend,
And enter into that same life which never shall have end,
I leave you here a little book for you to look upon,
That you may see your father's face when I am dead and gone;
Who, for the hope of heavenly things, while he did here remain,
Gave over all his golden years in prison and in pain,
Where I among mine iron bands, enclosed in the dark,
Not many days before my death, did dedicate this work
To you, mine heirs of earthly things which I have left behind,
That ye may read, and understand, and keep it in your mind,
That as you have been heirs of that which once shall wear away,
Even so ye may possess the part which never shall decay,
In following of your father's foot in faith, and eke in love,
That ye may also be his heirs for evermore above;
And in example to your youth, to whom I wish all good,
I preach you here a perfect faith, and seal it with my blood.

I shall trust I shall remember myself." The memento was not needed, for the faith which brought him to this death, supported him in it. Another martyr, as the time of his martyrdom drew near, complained of a heaviness at heart, from which he could obtain no relief, though he was earnest day and night in prayer. The friend to whom he made this confession, exhorted him to play the man, seeing his cause was just and true, and not to doubt that the Lord would visit him in His good time, and satisfy his desire with plenty of consolation; and he besought him, when any such sense of comfort touched his heart, to shew some signification, that he might witness it. When they came in sight of the stake, the martyr clapped his hands exultingly, and cried out to him, "Austen, He is come! He is come!" and that, "with such joy and alacrity, as one seeming rather to be risen from some deadly danger to liberty of life, than as one passing out of the world by any pain of death."

The constancy of the martyrs, and the manifest sympathy of the people, provoked the persecutors to further cruelty. What they could not effect by the fear of death, they hoped to accomplish by torments in prison; their victims were fastened by the feet, hands, and neck, in the most painful postures; they were scourged and beaten, tortured with fire, and deprived of food. When Gardiner sent his alms-basket to the prison, he sent with it strict charge that not a scrap should be given to the heretics. The Roman Catholic Princes had determined to root out what they called heresy by fire and sword. England and Spain were the only countries where they could as yet act upon this determination, and they pursued it in both to the uttermost. Cardinal Pole ordered registers * to be kept of all persons who were reconciled to the Romish Church in every place and parish, that proceedings might be instituted against all whose names were not entered there. Commissioners for Inquisition were appointed, with power to summon and examine any persons upon oath touching their faith, and to seize upon the property of all who did not appear to answer their interrogatories. The only measure wanting to perpetuate the spiritual bondage of the nation, was the establishment of one of those accursed tribunals, which were at that time in full operation under the Spanish government; and this, in all likelihood, would have been done, if Mary's unhappy life had been prolonged. The same temper which encouraged the Inquisition in Spain, and introduced it into the Netherlands, would have attempted its introduction here. The

* Strype's Cranmer, p. 347.

spirit of its laws had already been introduced ; but the feelings of the country were opposed to this atrocious system. The secrets of the prison-house could not be concealed ; every where the victims found some who commiserated them, and assisted them in communicating with their friends, even when they were fain to write their mournful letters with their own blood. And when the bodies of those who died in prison, either of natural disease, or in consequence of hunger and the torments inflicted on them, were cast out as carrion in the fields, all persons being forbidden to bury them ; as soon as evening closed, they were interred by pious hands, not without some form of devotion, the archers frequently standing by, and singing psalms.

During the four years that this persecution continued, it appears, by authentic records, that two hundred and eighty-eight persons were burnt alive : the number of those who perished in prison is unknown. The loss of property in London alone, consequent upon the arrest or flight of so many substantial citizens, and the general insecurity, was estimated at £300,000 ; nor was it in wealth alone that the kingdom suffered ; the spirit of the nation sunk, and the character, and with it the prosperity, of the English would have been irrecoverably lost, if God in His mercy had not cut short this execrable tyranny. The Queen was supposed to be with child : humanly speaking, it seemed to depend upon the event whether England should become a Protestant or a Popish kingdom : and there was such a disposition in the Protestants not to believe what they so greatly dreaded, and to persuade themselves, that a supposititious child would be imposed upon them, that many were punished for uttering the opinion with which they were possessed. Provision was made by Parliament, that, in case of the Queen's death, Philip should take upon himself the rule, order, education, and government of the child ; and prayers were ordered, that as God, by his servant Mary, had delivered the people out of the hands of heretics and infidels, so he would complete the work by blessing her with a safe delivery, and with a male child. Upon a report of her delivery, the bells rung and processions were made, and public rejoicings were made at Antwerp. But those appearances which had so far deceived the Queen herself, that the cradle was made ready, proved to be the indications of a mortal disease.

Not a week before her death, three women and two men were burnt at Canterbury. Certain circumstances rendered this last *auto-da-fe* remarkable. John Corneford, one of the victims, when the sentence of excommunication was pronounced upon him and

his stake-fellows, boldly retorted it upon his persecutors. "In the name of our Lord," said the courageous martyr, "and by the power of his Holy Spirit, we do here give into the hands of Satan, to be destroyed, the bodies of all those blasphemers who condemn his most holy truth for heresy, to the maintenance of any false Church, or feigned religion; so that by this thy just judgment, O most mighty God, against thy adversaries, thy true religion may be known, to thy great glory and our comfort, to the edifying of all our nation. Good Lord, so be it. Amen!" It is not surprising that the Protestants believed this imprecation to have taken effect against their enemy, when, "within six days after, Queen Mary died, and the tyranny of all English Papists with her." These martyrs seem to have expected this desirable end, when they made it part of their prayers before they suffered, that their blood might be the last that should be shed. One of them, a young unmarried woman, called at the stake for her godfather and godmothers, who, by the presiding magistrate's orders, were sent for accordingly. When they came she asked them what they had promised for her at her baptism; and, repeating the Commandments and the Creed, demanded if they had engaged in her behalf that she should believe more than this? They answered, that they had not. "Then," said she, "I die a Christian woman! Bear witness of me!"

The sacrifice of these victims is imputed to the individual cruelty of Harpsfield, then Archdeacon of Canterbury, a person as conspicuous among the persecutors at that time, as he was afterwards among the writers in defence of the Papal cause. He hurried on this execution, when such odious proceedings were in other places suspended, because the Queen's death was daily looked for. That event was not regretted, even by the Romanists, except by such as Harpsfield, and Story, and Bonner. "Melancholic in mind" (so she is described*), "unhealthful in body, little feared of her foreign foes, less beloved by her native subjects; not over dear to her own husband, unsuccessful in her treaties for peace, and unfortunate in her undertakings for war," Queen Mary left none to lament her, and there was not even the semblance of sorrow for her loss. She died in the morning; in the afternoon the bells of all the churches in London were rung for the accession of Elizabeth, and at night bonfires were made, and tables set out in the streets, at which the citizens caroused.

* Fuller, b. viii. p. 23.

CHAPTER XV.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

THE first act of the new Queen was to take Sir William Cecil into her council, and appoint him her principal Secretary ; and of such consequence was the pulpit at this crisis, that one of the first objects * of his attention was “to consider the condition of the preacher at Paul’s Cross,” and prevent any question concerning the governance of the realm from being touched upon there. The people had not been so ready to restore the Romish religion at Mary’s accession, as they were now to escape from its intolerable yoke. When the Queen made her public entrance, a pageant was prepared in Cheapside, where Time accosted her, leading in his hand his daughter Truth, and Truth presented her with the English Bible,† upon which was written, *Verbum Veritatis*. Elizabeth kissed the book, held it up with both her hands, and then laid it reverently upon her breast, to the joy of the beholders.

Elizabeth’s life had been in imminent danger during her sister’s reign. “It would make a pitiful and strange story,” says Holinshed, “to recite what examinations and rackings of poor men there were to find out that knife which should cut her throat ; what gaping among my lords of the clergy, to see the day wherein they might wash their white rockets in her innocent blood, but especially Stephen Gardiner.” Philip’s‡ interference saved her life ; but when she was committed to the custody of Sir Henry Beningsfield at Woodstock, the unworthy Knight treated her with such severity, using his office, it is said, more like a jailer than a gentleman, that the Princess, hearing a milk-maid one day sing cheerfully in the fields, wished herself in the same humble condition of life, so she might enjoy the same liberty and safety. She now manifested her resentment of this treatment no otherwise than by discharging Sir Henry from the Court, saying, “God forgive you that is past, and we do ; and if we have any prisoner whom we would have hardly handled and straitly kept, then we will send for you.”§ On the way to her coronation she expressed a due sense of the danger from which she had been preserved, in this prayer, “O Lord, almighty and everlasting God, I give thee most hearty thanks, that thou hast

* Strype’s Annals, i. p. 5.

† Ibid. p. 30.

‡ Burnet, ii. p. 287.

§ Grafton, ii. p. 548. ed. 1802.

been so merciful unto me, as to spare me to behold this joyful day! And I acknowledge that thou hast dealt as wonderfully and as mercifully with me, as thou didst with thy true and faithful servant Daniel, thy Prophet, whom thou deliverdest out of the den, from the cruelty of the greedy and raging lions. Even so was I overwhelmed, and only by thee delivered. To Thee, therefore, only, be thanks, honour, and praise, for ever. Amen!"

St Paul's Cross was supplied with a safe preacher in the person * of Dr Bill, the Queen's chaplain, and almoner. The necessity of this precaution appeared when White, the Bishop of Winchester, preached the late Queen's funeral sermon. He extolled her because, having found the realm poisoned with heresy, she had purged it; and "remembering herself to be a member of Christ's Church, refused to write herself head thereof. To be born in Christ's Church," he said, "and not abide therein is horrible, execrable, cursed, and damnable. . . . I was regenerate, and, by a solemn vow, became a member of Christ's Catholic Church; and have since divided myself from the unity thereof, and am become a member of the new Church of Geneva. Reformed by penance, I am now relapsed again to sin. Mark my end, . . . and what shall become of me? I shall in the end be damned everlastingly." Touching those who died in heresy, "it shall suffice me to say," said he, "and you to know, that they be in pain, in dolour, in ire, in fire, in darkness and horror; the indignation, the scourge, the vengeance of God, with confusion and damnation everlasting, is poured on them: neither have they qualification of pain, nor intermission of time, nor hope of end." And, speaking of the duty of those in his calling, he said, "Being by God appointed to keep watch and ward upon the walls, if they see the wolf towards the flock (as at this present I warn you the wolves be coming out of Geneva, and other places of Germany, and have sent their books before, full of pestilent doctrines, blasphemy, and heresy, to infect the people), . . . if the bishops, I say, and the ministers, in this case, should not give warning, neither withstand and resist, but for fear or flattery with the world, forsake their places, and thereby give occasion to the wolf to enter, then should the blood of the people be required at their hands."

The Bishop was ordered to keep his house for the offence he had given by this sermon.† The restraint was not continued long; and having been brought before the Lords of the Council, and admonished by them, he was released. The cruelties of the

* Strype's Annals, i. p. 36.

† Ibid. i. p. 34.

preceding reign were regarded with abhorrence by all, except those who had been instrumental in them; and, from principle not less than policy, Elizabeth had resolved to proceed mildly and temperately, as well as firmly, in establishing the reformed church. For this reason, and because the Romanists preached seditiously, and the eager Reformers encouraged by their discourses the disposition of the people to outrun the law, and demolish images and altars, all preaching was forbidden for a time; and if any should be bold enough to disregard the proclamation, all persons were forbidden to hear them,* till the Queen and the three estates in Parliament should have consulted for the reconciliation of matters of religion.

When the Bill for restoring the supremacy to the Crown was debated in Parliament, it was opposed by the Bishops. Heath said, "that as concerning temporal government, the House could give her Highness no further authority than she already had by right and inheritance, not by their gift, but by the appointment of God, she being their sovereign Lord and Lady, their King and Queen, their Emperor and Empress. But spiritual government they could not grant, neither could she receive." "If," said he, "by relinquishing the See of Rome, there were none other matter than a withdrawing of our obedience from the Pope's person, Paul IV., which hath declared himself to be a very austere stern father unto us ever since his first entrance into Peter's chair, then the cause were not of such great importance; . . . but by forsaking that See, we must forsake the unity of Christ's Church, and by leaping out of Peter's ship, hazard ourselves to be overwhelmed and drowned in the waters of schism, sects, and divisions."† The Bishop of Chester, speaking upon the same subject, asked of whom those men, who in this and other points dissented from the Catholic Church, learned their doctrine? "They must needs answer," said he, "that they learned it of the Germans. Of whom did the Germans learn it? Of Luther. Well, then, of whom did Luther learn it? He shall answer himself: he saith, that such things as he teacheth against the Mass and the blessed Sacrament of the Altar, he learned of Satan the Devil, at whose hands it is like he did also receive the rest of his doctrines. . . . So that we may be bold to stand in our doctrine against our adversaries, seeing that theirs is not yet fifty years old, and ours above fifteen hundred. They have for authority and commendation of their religion, Luther and his schoolmaster before mentioned; we

* Strype's Annals, i. p. 41, 53.

† Ibid. i. App. vi.

have for ours St Peter and his master Christ."* The same prelate made an unlucky speech against the Bill for restoring the reformed Liturgy. "Christian charity," he said, "was taken away by it, in that the unity of the Church was broken;" and, proceeding more unhappily, he said, "It is no money matter, but a matter of inheritance, . . . yea, a matter touching life and death; and damnation dependeth upon it. Here is it set before us, as the Scripture saith, Life and death, fire and water. If we put our hand into the one, we shall live; if it take hold of the other, we shall die. Now to discern which is life and which is death, which is fire that will burn, and which is water that will refresh and comfort us, is a great matter, and not easily perceived of every man."† It required a front of brass to have ventured upon such a metaphor, while the *autos-da-fe* of the Marian persecution were fresh in remembrance.

The infamous persecutor, Story, went beyond this in the House of Commons. He boasted of the part he had taken, related with exultation‡ how he had thrown a faggot in the face of an earwig, as he called him, who was singing psalms at the stake, and how he had thrust a thornbush under his feet to prick him: wished that he had done more; and said he only regretted that they should have laboured at the young and little twigs, when they ought to have struck at the root, . . . words by which it was understood that he meant the Queen. Even this treasonable insolence did not provoke the Government to depart from the temperate course which it had laid down. A public disputation was appointed, not, as in Mary's reign, to be concluded by burning those who differed in opinion from the ruling party, but with full liberty of speech, and perfect safety, for the Romish disputants. Upon Heath's motion, the Queen ordered that it should be managed in writing, as the best means for avoiding vain altercation: but when it came to the point, the Romanists, upon some difference concerning the manner of disputing, refused to dispute at all. For this contempt of the Privy Council, in whose presence they had met, they were fined. The truth was, that if they had been more confident in their own cause, they deemed it not allowable to bring such points in question before such judges. They seem also to have presumed upon the insecurity of the Queen's government, and upon her tolerant disposition. In the latter they were not deceived. Odious as the persecutors were, and in many respects amenable to the laws, she suffered no vindictive measures to be taken against them;

* Strype's Annals, i. App. vii.

† Ibid. App. x.

‡ Ibid. i. p. 115.

and the strongest mark which she manifested of her own displeasure, was in refusing to let Bonner kiss her hand. The Archbishop of York had refused to perform the ceremony of crowning her, because she forbade the host to be elevated in her presence; it was his office, Cardinal Pole having died a few hours after Queen Mary. Except Oglethorpe, of Carlisle, all the other bishops, in like manner, refused, thereby giving the most audacious proof of determined disobedience.

But Elizabeth did not suffer herself to be moved, even by a just resentment, from the course of conduct which she thought best. When she was advised to punish these dangerous subjects, she * replied, "Let us not follow our sister's example, but rather shew that our Reformation tendeth to peace and not to cruelty." She summoned them, with the other heads of the clergy, and required them, in pursuance of the laws recently made for religion, and for restoring to the Crown its ancient right of supremacy, to take into serious consideration the affairs of the Church, and expel from it all schisms and superstitions. Heath answered, in the name of his brethren, by entreating her to call to mind the covenants between her sister and the holy See, wherein she had promised to depress heresy, binding herself and her successors, and her kingdom to accomplish it, under pain of perpetual ignominy and a curse. The Queen made answer, that it lay not in her sister's power to bind her and her realms to an usurped authority; that as Joshua declared, I and my house will serve the Lord, so she and her realm were resolved to serve Him; and that she would esteem, as enemies to God and to her, all her subjects who should own the usurped power of the Bishop of Rome. Without delay she then deprived the refractory bishops, Kitchen of Landaff being the only one who conformed. There were but fourteen living, many having died in the great mortality at the close of the preceding reign. The survivors deceived themselves. They thought they had done the work of persecution so effectually, by taking off the heads of the Reformed clergy, that the Queen could not displace them, because she could not possibly supply their places. They knew not how many most able and excellent men had escaped their vengeance, and employed their years of exile or concealment in the severe study of divinity: "men," says a writer of that age, "who, coming forth of affliction and evils, were looked upon with contempt by the Romanists: simple men, without pontifical ornaments to set them out, but eminent for the integrity of their

* Strype's Annals, i. 147.

lives, the gravity of their behaviour, the greatness of their spirits, and finally, for their diligent search and accurate knowledge of Scripture, councils, orthodox fathers, and all ecclesiastical antiquity."

The vacant sees were filled by Parker, Grindal, Cox, Sands, Jewel, Parkhurst, Pilkington, and others; men worthy to be held in lasting remembrance and honour, who had either escaped, during the Marian persecution, by retiring to the Continent, or secreting themselves at home. It had been one chief cause of consolation to the martyrs, to think that so many of their brethren were safe, reserved, as they doubted not, for this great work. "Since there be in those parts with you, of students and ministers so good a number," said Ridley* writing from his prison to Grindal at Frankfort, "now, therefore, care you not for us, otherwise than to wish that God's glory may be set forth by us. For whensoever God shall call us home, (as we look daily for none other; but when it shall please God to say, Come!) you, blessed be God, are enow, through his aid, to light and set up again the lantern of his Word in England." Gardiner had exerted his utmost vigilance to cut off all their supplies from home, vowing† that "he would make them eat their own nails for very hunger, and then feed on their fingers' ends." But this was more than he was able to effect. They still communicated with their friends, and received assistance from them; and they met with exemplary hospitality in the reformed countries, more especially in Switzerland. Ridley's prophetic hope was now fulfilled. Three of the Protestant bishops returned from exile; . . . Barlow, who, having been one of the first and ablest writers in this country against the Lutherans, saw reason afterwards to adopt their tenets in all things reasonable, and remained constant to them through evil and through good; Scory, and good old Miles Coverdale. By their hands Parker was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury. This excellent prelate had been Chaplain to Queen Anne Boleyn, who, a little before her death, particularly‡ commended her daughter Elizabeth to his care, "that she might not want his pious and wise counsel." His religious opinions he had imbibed from Bilney and Barnes; and his exemplary courage had been manifested during the Norfolk rebellion; when, at the imminent risk of his life, he preached to the rebels, from their own Oak of Reformation, upon the

* Fox, vol. iii. p. 373.

† Fuller, b. viii. p. 35. "But threatened folk live long," says this pithy writer, "and before these banished men

were brought to that short bill of fare, the Bishop was first of all eaten up of worms himself."

‡ Strype's Parker, vii.

guilt and madness of their proceedings. Ridley, in inviting him to preach at St Paul's Cross (the post of honour in those days), thus touched * upon his qualifications: "I may have, if I would call without any choice, enow: but in some, alas, I desire more learning; in some a better judgment; in some more virtue and godly conversation; and in some more soberness and discretion. And he in whom all these do meet, shall not do well to refuse, in my judgment, to serve God in that place." During Mary's reign he had been deprived of his preferments, and was in great personal danger, living in concealment; strict search was made for him; and, in flying by night, he received a hurt by a fall from his horse, from which he never thoroughly recovered. He was now in the fifty-fourth year of his age, when Cecil and Sir Nicholas Bacon fixed upon him as the fittest man for the Primacy at this important time. Parker, with unaffected humility, sought to decline this great promotion, pleading, among other reasons for excuse, the injury which he had received in his fall. He told Bacon, on whose friendship he relied, that his wish was, to be enabled, by the revenue of some prebend without charge of cure, to occupy himself in dispensing God's word among the poor simple strayed sheep of God's fold in poor destitute parishes and cures; more meet, he said, for his decayed voice and small quality, than in theatrical and great audiences. Or that he might be stationed in the university, the state whereof was miserable, and where, if anywhere, he might perhaps do service, having long acquaintance and some experience in its affairs. And he entreated Bacon either to help that he might be quite forgotten, or so appointed, as not to be entangled with the concourse of the world in any public state of living. He prayed that their choice might neither light on an arrogant man, nor a faint-hearted, nor a covetous one: the first, he said, would sit in his own light, and discourage his fellows; the second would be too weak to commune with the adversaries, who would be the stouter upon his pusillanimity; and the third would not be worth his bread." But Elizabeth's wise ministers knew Parker's worth, and would admit of no excuse.

The Lord Keeper Bacon, at the dissolution of the first Parliament, spoke of the enemies to the religion now re-established: "Among these," he said, "he comprehended as well those that were too swift, as those that were too slow; those that went before the law, or behind the law, as those who would not

* Strype's Parker, vii. 29.

follow : for good government could not be where obedience failed, and both these alike broke the rule of obedience. These were they that, in all likelihood, would be the beginners and maintainers of factions and sects : the very mothers and nurses of all seditions and tumults. Of these, therefore, great heed should be taken ; and upon their being found, sharp and severe corrections imposed, according to the order of law ; and that without respect of persons, as upon the greatest adversaries to unity and concord, without which no commonwealth could long endure." The immediate danger was from the Romanists. But their policy at this time accorded, fortunately, with the views of the Government ; for when it was perceived how well and easily the places of the deposed bishops had been supplied, the party changed their system, and determined * to retain what benefices they held, at the expense of outward conformity, thinking the best service which they could render to the Papal cause, was to keep possession of their posts, in the hope and expectation of better times. The double purpose would thus be answered, of keeping Protestant ministers out, and secretly fostering in their parishioners a predilection for the old superstitions ; and their policy was by this means reconciled with their interest.

With such unanimity did they act upon this deceitful system, that of 9400 beneficed clergy, only 177 resigned † their preferment, rather than acknowledge the Queen's supremacy. So far as the great majority were influenced by selfish considerations, their object was answered, but as a politic measure, never were men more egregiously mistaken ; and this they discovered when too late. It was a most important object for Government to bring about the great change in the quietest manner, with as little injury as possible, to individuals, and as little offence to the feelings, and even prejudices, of the people. For this reason, the supplication, saying, "from the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and all his detestable enormities, good Lord, deliver us !" which was part of the Litany in the Liturgy of Edward's reign, was expunged ‡ now. For the same reason, it was enjoined, that the sacramental bread should be continued in the form of wafers ; and the language of the article which affirmed a real presence, was so framed as to allow latitude of belief for those who were persuaded of an exclusive one. The effect was an almost general conformity, on the part of the Romanists, without doubt or scruple concerning the propriety of so conforming ; till, to their own great misfortune and that of the country,

* Strype's Annals, i. p. 104, 105.

† Ibid. i. p. 72.

‡ Ibid. i. p. 84.

they were required by the Papal Court to pursue a different course.

Heath, Bonner, Turberville, and two of the other deprived bishops, thought it their duty to address a letter to the Queen, entreating her to listen to them, rather than to those evil counsellors who were leading her astray. Her ancestors, they reminded her, had duly and reverently observed the ancient Catholic faith, till by heretical and schismatical advisers, her father was first withdrawn, and then her brother; "after whose decease," said they, "your virtuous sister, Queen Mary, of happy memory, succeeded: who, being troubled in conscience with what her father's and her brother's advisers had caused them to do, most piously restored the Catholic faith by establishing the same again; as also by extinguishing the schisms and heresies, which at that time began to flame over her territories, for which God poured out his wrath upon most of the malefactors and misleaders of the nation." Elizabeth* replied to this letter instantly: she denied their assertion that Christianity had been first planted in this kingdom by the Romish Church; and she answered the remarks upon her father's having listened to heretical advisers, by cutting personalities. "Who, we pray, advised him more, or flattered him, than you, good Mr Heath, when you were Bishop of Rochester? And than you, Mr Bonner, when you were Archdeacon? And you, Mr Turberville? Nay, further, who was more an adviser of our father, than your great Stephen Gardiner when he lived? Recollect: was it our sister's conscience made her so averse to our father's and brother's actions as to undo what they had perfected? Or was it not you, or such like advisers, that dissuaded her, and stirred her up against us, and others of her subjects? We give you warning," she concluded, "that for the future, we hear no more of this kind, lest you provoke us to execute those penalties enacted for the punishment of our resisters, which out of our clemency we have forborne."

The Queen was contented with thus reprimanding them, though the manner in which they spoke of the atrocities of the last reign might well have justified some stronger mark of displeasure. But when it appeared that some of these bishops preached against the new order of things, and encouraged a seditious spirit in those who flocked to them (White and Watson venturing even to threaten the Queen with excommunication), it was found necessary to place them under some degree

* Strype's Annals, i. p. 147.

of restraint. Heath, after a short confinement in the Tower, was allowed to reside upon his own lordship of Chobham,* merely upon giving security that he would not interfere with state affairs, or interrupt the laws. Elizabeth always esteemed him, and sometimes visited him in his old age. Oglethorpe died almost immediately after the coronation. Tonsal and Thirlby were both committed to the gentle custody of Parker; instead of being confined in his coal-house, they lived at his table, and were treated by him as honourable guests. Shame, rather than conviction, seems to have kept them from conforming: for Tonsal was avowedly more than half a† Protestant, and Thirlby acted with better faith, when he co-operated with Cranmer, than when Bonner was his bloody associate. Bonner was committed to the‡ Marshalsea, where he had the use of the garden and orchards, and lived as he liked, without any other privation than that of liberty; for though he was allowed to go abroad, he dared not, because of the hatred of the people. He never betrayed the slightest shame or compunction for the cruelties which he had committed, but maintained to the last the same coarse and insolent temper; indeed, it was rumoured§ and believed, that he looked for no life but the present, and therefore had no hope or fear beyond it. Three of the ex-bishops withdrew to the continent. The others lived unmolested, and died at large, except Watson, always a morose, and latterly a dangerous man, whom it was deemed necessary to commit to close prison, when the Romanists began their treasonable practices.

It was now the Romanists' turn to plead|| conscience, and argue that gentle usage ought to be afforded to those whose only offence consisted in a difference of opinion upon religious subjects. The Emperor, and other Catholic¶ princes, wrote to the Queen in behalf of the ejected clergy, requesting that they might be mercifully dealt withal, and that churches might be allowed to the Papists in all the cities and chief towns. The way to have obtained this, would have been to have given an example in

* Not *Cobham*, as generally stated. I am obliged to the Vicar of Chobham (where Heath was buried) for correcting the error. It is frequently made, both places being in the same county, and within ten miles of each other. The advowson of the one was purchased by a gentleman who thought he was buying the other, and who did not discover his mistake till, upon intelligence that the living had become vacant, he made his inquiries at Cobham, and found the incumbent there alive, and likely to live.

† Strype's Parker, 47.

‡ "He was deprived and secured," says Fuller, "in his castle, I mean the Marshalsea in Southwark: for as that prison kept him from doing hurt to others, it kept others from doing hurt to him, being so universally odious, he had been stoned in the streets if at liberty."—Worthies, vol. ii. p. 469.

§ Strype's Annals, i. p. 573.

|| Ibid. i. p. 295, 304.

¶ Ibid. i. p. 148.

their own dominions of the clemency and toleration which they required. Elizabeth * answered, that though these Popish clergy insolently and openly opposed the laws and the peace of the realm, and wilfully rejected the doctrines which they themselves had preached under the kings Henry and Edward, she was dealing and would deal favourably with them; albeit not without some offence to her subjects, seeing how cruelly these men had acted toward the Protestants in her sister's reign. But to grant them churches would be against the laws of her Parliament, and highly dangerous to the state of her kingdom. It would be to sow various religions in the realm, to distract good people's minds, to cherish parties and factions, and to disturb religion and the commonwealth in that quiet state wherein it then was; . . . a thing evil in itself, and in example worse; to her own good subjects hurtful, and neither greatly commodious nor safe unto those for whom it was asked.

The Queen had recalled the English resident from Rome, but the Pope ordered him, on pain of excommunication, not to leave the city, and to take upon himself the government of the English hospital there. The order was believed to be in conformity with the resident's wishes, and given to prevent him from apprizing his Government of the secret practices of the French against Elizabeth. Pius IV. soon succeeded to the Papacy, and on his accession, despatched a nuncio to England with secret instructions, and a conciliatory† letter. He entreated the Queen, as his most dear daughter, that, rejecting those counsellors, who loved themselves, not her, and served their own desires, she would take the fear of God to counsel, and acknowledge the time of her visitation. In that case, he promised to confirm her royal dignity, according to the authority and functions committed to him by God; told her that he would receive her with the same love, honour, and rejoicings, as the father in the Gospel had received the prodigal son; and that by so doing, she would not only fill the whole Church with rejoicings, but even heaven itself. The secret articles were reported to be, that he would annul the sentence against her mother's marriage, allow the use of the cup to the English, and confirm the English Liturgy. But Elizabeth had chosen the better part; and the nuncio, while on his way, was informed that he could not be permitted to set foot in England.

The Reformation had divided Europe into two great parties, but providentially at this time there was a rooted enmity between

* Strype's Annals, i. p. 148.

† Ibid. i. p. 223.

the two great Catholic kingdoms of France and Spain ; and this contributed essentially to Elizabeth's preservation during the first years of her reign. Mary, the Queen of Scotland, and at that time wife of the Dauphin, always a dangerous rival, would then have been a most formidable one, if Elizabeth had not been both secretly and openly supported by the Spanish Court. The King of France claimed the kingdom for his son, in Mary's right ; they quartered the arms of England with those of Scotland and France, and urged the Pope to pronounce Elizabeth illegitimate and heretical, and to declare Mary the lawful Queen. Philip's influence prevented this. Henri's death delivered England from a treacherous and powerful enemy : the French, by their impolitic conduct in Scotland, gave Elizabeth just cause for taking part with the Protestants in that country ; and when Mary, being soon left a widow, returned thither, her own situation was so beset with difficulties and troubles, that she had little power, and less leisure, for tampering with the English mal-contented. But from the time when Mary, seeking an asylum in England, was made a prisoner there, she became a point of hope, as well as an object of commiseration, to the English Catholics ; and she was more formidable to Elizabeth in her state of bondage, than if she had continued Queen of France.

Two persons so circumstanced with regard to each other as the Queens of England and Scotland, must have been mortal enemies, unless they had been women of saintly piety and virtue. Both were endowed with extraordinary talents, and in the natural dispositions of both, it is probable that the better qualities greatly preponderated. But they were so situated, that it was scarcely possible for them to think or act justly towards each other. Mary, as a Catholic, believed Elizabeth to be illegitimate, and therefore thought herself entitled to the crown of England. The Romanists, and especially the powerful family of the Guises, to which she was related, acted openly upon the principle, that all measures were allowable against the enemies of the Romish Church : and even if this had not been the system of the Romanists in that age, Mary might have felt herself justified in using any means for delivering herself from an unjust captivity. If we may not infer from history that the most generous policy is in all cases the best, this at least may be affirmed, that in a state of society, where right principles of morality are acknowledged, and public opinion is of any weight, no policy which has even the semblance of injustice can be good. Elizabeth would have better consulted her own safety and honour by sending Mary

to France, than by detaining her in durance. Yet it must be remembered, that many circumstances seemed to render her detention essential for the welfare both of her own kingdom and of this; that Burleigh, by whose advice Elizabeth acted, was not only a profound statesman, but also a virtuous and religious man; and that the accession of Mary to the English throne, would certainly have been followed by a second * Marian persecution.

The hopes of the English Romanists for what they called † a golden day, were kept up by false prophecies, and by the intrigues both of the French and Spaniards. An insurrection, in which the Scotch Papists were to have joined, and which Alva had promised to aid with troops from the Netherlands, broke out in the North, but was easily suppressed; and the Pope, who had hitherto in secret fomented disaffection, and encouraged plots, now openly called upon the English Papists to rebel. Pius V., the servant of the servants of God, "being," he said, "as Peter's successor, prince over all people, and all kingdoms, to pluck up, destroy, scatter, consume, plant, and build," publicly excommunicated Elizabeth, whom he called the pretended Queen of England, and the servant of wickedness: "seeing," he said, "that impieties and wicked actions were multiplied through her instigation, he cut her off as a heretic, and favourer of heretics, from the unity of the body of Christ; deprived her of her pretended title to the kingdom, and of all dominion, dignity, and privilege whatsoever; absolved all her subjects from their allegiance, forbade them to obey her, or her laws; and included all who should disregard this prohibition, in the same sentence of excommunication." A Catholic publicly set up this bull upon the Bishop of London's palace gates, in St Paul's Churchyard, and made no attempt to escape. For this, he was executed as a traitor. But the writers of his own Church extolled him as a martyr, and the Pope who issued the bull has been canonised.

It is certain that the modern Romanists in this country disapproved of what the Pope had done: but it is certain also, that it was in the spirit of the Papal Church, and that, throughout the Roman Catholic world, no voice was raised against it. Hitherto the conduct of Elizabeth's Government toward the

* Hall, a conforming Papist, who was ejected from the wardenship of Merton College, in 1562, writes thus to one of his Catholic friends abroad: "*Frigent apud nos hæretici; sed spero eos aliquando*

ferrescere, sicut olim vidimus archihæreticos in fossâ illâ suburbanâ ubi Vulcano traditi fuerunt."—Strype's Parker, p. 117.

† Strype's Annals, i. p. 611.

Romanists had been tolerant and conciliatory, in accord with her own feelings, and with those of her statesmen and prelates; insomuch, that when the statute for establishing the supremacy was past, whereby they who refused the oath were punishable by forfeiture of goods and chattels for the first offence, made liable to the penalties of a *præmunire* for the second, and for the third, declared guilty of high treason; it was provided, that none but those who held ecclesiastical or civil offices, should be required to take it; and the prelates were privately instructed by Parker, with the * knowledge of Cecil and the Queen, not to offer the oath a second time. Severer statutes were now made necessary. It was made treasonable to deny that Elizabeth was the lawful sovereign; to affirm that she was a heretic, schismatic, or infidel; and to procure or introduce bulls or briefs from the Pope. Still the Government continued its forbearance, till it was compelled, by the duty of self-preservation, to regard its Papistical subjects with suspicion, and treat them with severity.

Let it be remembered, that the Romish Church had abated none of its pretensions, and corrected none of its abuses. Its audacity was never greater, its frauds never more numerous nor more impudent, its cruelties never more atrocious than at that time. If the horrors of Queen Mary's reign had not been fresh in remembrance, the character of that bloody Church would have been sufficiently displayed by the proceedings of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions, then in full activity; and by the merciless persecution which had now driven the Dutch to assert their liberty in arms. What the Papists were doing in those countries, they had done in this, and beyond all doubt would eagerly have done again, if the power had been once more in their hands. Persecution was their duty, if they believed their own principles; it was enjoined by their highest authority, that of a General Council, with the Pope at its head. In England, indeed, they pleaded for toleration, saying, that the attempt to force belief was repugnant to all laws; that no man can, or ought to be, constrained to take for certain what he holdeth for uncertain; that for the love of God, it behoved us to forget and forgive all griefs, and love one another; and that when all was done, to this we must come at last. Nothing could be more just than this argument, and nothing more contrary to their own practices. For they avowed the principle of intolerance wherever they had the power, and acted upon it without compunction, to the utmost extent. Nothing in the Mexican or

* Strype's Parker, i. p. 125.

Carthaginian superstitions (the two most horrible of the heathen world), was ever more execrable than the persecutions exercised in Elizabeth's age, by the Romish Church, wherever it was dominant. The cruelty of Nero toward the Christians was imitated in Paris at the inauguration of Henri II. : as a part of the solemnity and of the rejoicings, Protestants were fastened to the stake in the principal streets, and the piles were kindled at such times,* that the King might see the martyrs enveloped by the flames in their full force, at the moment when he should pass by! The Parliament of Paris made a decree, declaring it lawful to kill Huguenots wherever they could be found ; and they ordered this decree to be read every Sunday, in every parish church. The massacre of St Bartholomew's day completed the crimes of that guilty city, and made the perfidy of the Romish Church as notorious as its corruption and its inhumanity. The head of Coligny, after having been presented to the King and the Queen-mother, was embalmed and sent to † Rome, that the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Pope might have the satisfaction of beholding it. Public rejoicings were made at Rome for this accursed event. A solemn service of thanksgiving was performed, at which the Pope himself assisted ; and medals were struck in honour of the most enormous crime with which the annals of the Christian world had ever been stained. That the blow might be the more fatal to the Protestant cause, the two sons of the Elector Palatine had been invited from Germany ; and Leicester and Burleigh, as the chief supporters of that cause from England ; . . . either to be secured as prisoners, or involved in the massacre. Nor did the machinations of the Guises end there ; with the evident intention of entrapping Elizabeth herself, she was solicited to meet the Queen-mother either on the seas, or in the island of Jersey ; a proposal so gross, after such a proof of the most flagitious treachery, that Burleigh ‡ told the French ambassador, his mistress could not have believed it had been made, if it had not been shewn her in the letter from the Queen-mother herself. Upon this occasion prayers were put up in England, not for the persecuted only, but for the persecutors. "Save them, O merciful Lord," was the language of our § Church, "who are as sheep appointed to the slaughter ! hear their cry, O Lord, and our prayers for them and for ourselves. Deliver those that be oppressed ; defend those that be in fear of cruelty ; relieve them that be in misery ; and comfort all that be in sorrow

* Strype's Cranmer, p. 448.

† Strype's Annals, i. p. 158.

‡ Ibid. ii. p. 162.

§ Strype's Parker, p. 359.

and heaviness; that by thy aid and strength they and we may obtain surety from our enemies, without shedding of Christian and innocent blood. And for that, O Lord, thou hast commanded us to pray for our enemies, we do beseech thee, not only to abate their pride, and to stay the cruelty and fury of such as either of malice or ignorance do persecute them which put their trust in Thee, but also to mollify their hard hearts, to open their blind eyes, and to enlighten their ignorant minds, that they may see and understand, and truly turn unto Thee."

The disposition of the Government entirely accorded with this language. But it was now compelled to act with severity against those, who, under the influence of a religious principle, were engaged in political plots and treason. The Bull-Papists, as those were * called who approved all the measures of the Papal Court against the Queen, were undoubtedly at first a small minority. But the Popes allowed of no half-Papists; they who were not with them, they considered as against them; and an end therefore was put to that occasional conformity, whereby the great body of the Catholics had hitherto satisfied the laws, without in any degree compromising their principles. Allen, one of those Romanists who, preferring their Church to their country, had expatriated themselves, and who afterwards was raised to the rank of Cardinal, declared strongly against this conforming, which he called the very worst kind of hypocrisy; and he informed his English brethren, that the case had been laid before the Council of Trent, where a select number of Fathers had examined into it, and condemned the practice.

Had it not been for this interference, most of the Catholics would insensibly have passed over to the established religion; and those who adhered to the old faith, by continuing to deserve toleration, would, in no long time, have obtained it. Allen, whose opinion upon this question unhappily prevailed, was the author of another measure, not less injurious in its effects. As he was travelling to Rome in company with † Morgan Philips, who had been his tutor at Oriel, and with Veudeville, the professor of Canon Law at Douay, the latter happened to speak of a project for the relief of the Barbary slaves; this topic led Allen to lament his own country, as likely soon to fall into a worse slavery, when the old nonconforming priests of Queen Mary's reign should have dropt off; there being neither provision nor prospect of any to supply their place. This led him to form the plan of a seminary, in which English youths might be educated

* Strype's Annals, ii. p. 131.

† Dodd, ii. p. 45.

for the purpose of serving the Catholic faith in their own country. Philips subscribed the first money toward the purchase of a convenient house; and colleges were successively established at Douay, Rome, Valladolid, Seville, and St Omer's; and, in the reign of James I., at Madrid, Louvain, Liege, and Ghent. The Spanish Court contributed largely to their endowment and support, and great resources were drawn from England, especially from those Papists who possessed abbey lands. Douay College, which was transplanted to Rheims, and in about twenty years removed back to its original place, was under the management of secular priests, Allen himself being the first rector. The Jesuits soon obtained the direction of all the others; and the seminaries proved, what they were intended to be, so many nurseries for treason.

The Jesuits had risen up in the sixteenth century to perform for the Papal Church the same service which the Mendicant Orders had rendered in the twelfth. Their founder, like St Francis, was in a state of religious insanity when he began his career; but he possessed, above all other men, the rare talent of detecting his own deficiencies, and remedying them by the most patient diligence. More politic heads aided him in the construction of his system: and they succeeded in forming a scheme perfectly adapted to the purpose for which it was designed. Under the appearance, and with the efficient unity and strength of an absolute monarchy, the company was in reality always directed by a few of its ablest members. The most vigilant superintendence was exercised over all its parts, and yet, in acting for the general service, entire liberty was allowed to individual talents. For this reason, the Jesuits were exempted from all the stale and burthensome observances wherein the other religioners consumed so large a portion of their time. They admitted no person into the society, unless they perceived in him some qualities which might be advantageously employed; and in their admirable economy every one found his appropriate place, except the refractory and the vicious. Such members were immediately expelled, . . . the company would not be disturbed with the trouble of punishing, or endeavouring to correct them. But where they found that devoted obedience which was the prime qualification of a Jesuit, there was no variety of human character, from the lowest to the loftiest intellect, which they did not know how to employ, and to the best advantage. They had domestic offices for the ignorant and lowly; the task of education was committed to expert and patient scholars; men of

learning and research and genius were left to follow the bent of their own happy inclinations ; eloquent members were destined for the pulpit ; and while their politicians managed the affairs of the society, and by directing the consciences of kings and queens, and statesmen, directed, in fact, the government of Popish kingdoms, enthusiasts and fanatics were despatched to preach the gospel among the heathen, or to pervert the Protestants. Some went to reclaim the savages of America ; others, with less success, to civilise the barbarous Abyssinians, by reducing them to the Romish Church. And they who were ambitious of martyrdom, were ordered to Japan, where the slow fire, and the more lingering death of the pit, were to be endured ; or they went to England, which they called the European Japan, because, going thither as missionaries of a Church which had pronounced the Queen a heretic and an usurper, and forbidden all her Papistical subjects to obey her, on pain of excommunication, they went to form conspiracies, and concert plans of rebellion, and therefore exposed themselves to death as traitors.

The founders of this famous society adapted their institution with excellent wisdom to the circumstances of their age ; but they took the principles of the Romish Church as they found them, and thus engaged in the support and furtherance of a bad cause by wicked means. The whole odium of those means fell upon the Jesuits, not because they were the more guilty, but because they were the most conspicuous, . . . the Protestants, and especially the English, looking only at that order which produced their busiest and ablest enemies ; and the Romanists dexterously shifting upon an envied, and therefore a hated, community, the reproach which properly belongs to their Popes, their Councils, and their universal Church. In England, indeed, no other religioners were so active ; and this was because the celebrity of the order, as had been the case with every monastic order in its first age, attracted to it the most ardent and ambitious spirits. Young English Papists of this temper eagerly took the fourth and peculiar vow, which placed them as missionaries, at the absolute disposal of their Old Man of the Mountain ; . . . the Popes at that time had richly merited this title. For the principle of assassination was sanctioned by the two most powerful of the Popish Kings, and by the head of the Papal Church. It was acted upon in France and in Holland : rewards were publicly offered for the murder of the Prince of Orange ; and the fanatics who undertook to murder Elizabeth, were encouraged by a plenary remission of sins, granted for this special service.

Against the propagandists of such doctrine as was contained in the Bull of Pius V., and inculcated in the seminaries, Elizabeth was compelled, for self-preservation, to proceed severely. They were sought for and executed, not for believing in Transubstantiation, nor for performing Mass, but for teaching that the Queen of England ought to be deposed; that it was lawful to kill her; and that all Popish subjects, who obeyed her commands, were cut off from the communion of their Church for so doing. "The very end and purpose of these Jesuits and seminary men," said the * proclamation, "was not only to prepare sundry her Majesty's subjects, inclinable to disloyalty, to give aid to foreign invasions and stir up rebellion, but also (that most perilous is) to deprive her Majesty (under whom, and by whose provident government, with God's assistance, these realms have been so long and so happily kept and continued in great plenty, peace, and security) of her life, crown, and dignity." "As far as concerns our society," said Campian † the Jesuit, in an oration delivered at Douay, "we, all dispersed in great numbers through the world, have made a league and holy oath, that as long as any of us are alive, all our care and industry, all our deliberations and councils, shall never cease to trouble your calm and safety." The same enthusiast, when from his place of concealment he addressed a letter to the Privy Council, defying the heads of the English Church to a disputation before the Queen and Council, repeated the threat. "Be it known unto you," he ‡ said, "that we have made a league, all the Jesuits in the world, whose succession and multitude must overreach all the practices of England, cheerfully to carry the cross that you shall lay upon us, and never to despair your recovery while we have a man left to enjoy your Tyburn, or to be racked with your torments, or to be consumed with your prisons. Expenses are reckoned: the enterprise is begun: it is of God: it cannot be withstood. So the faith was planted. So it must be restored."

Campian and his fellow-sufferers acted up to the lofty spirit of this declaration. They died as martyrs, according to their own views, and as martyrs they were then regarded, and are still represented, by the Romanists. Certain, however, it is, that they suffered for points of state, and not of faith; not as Roman Catholics, but as Bull-Papists; not for religion, but for treason. Some of them are to be admired as men of genius

* Strype's Annals, iii. p. 85.

† Strype's Annals, vol. iii. p. 33.

‡ Bishop Hacket's Life of Archbishop Ditto, Appendix, p. 14.
Williams, p. 134.

and high endowments, as well as of heroic constancy: all to be lamented, as acting for an injurious purpose, under a mistaken sense of duty; but their sufferings belong to the history of Papal politics, not to that of religious persecution. They succeeded in raising one rebellion, which was easily suppressed, for Elizabeth was deservedly popular, and the Protestants had now become the great majority: but repeated conspiracies against the life of the Queen were detected; and such were the avowed principles and intentions of the Papists, wherever they dared avow them, that Walsingham * expressed his fears of a Bartholomew breakfast, or a Florence banquet.

The object of all these conspiracies was to set the Queen of Scots upon the throne; this, the English † Jesuits said was the only means of reforming all Christendom, by reducing it to the Catholic faith; and they boasted that there were "more heads occupied upon it than English heads, and more ways to the wood than one." A book was written by a friend of ‡ Campian's, wherein the ladies who were about Elizabeth's person were exhorted, after the example of Judith, to destroy her. Many of the Protestant nobles and gentry deemed the danger so great, that they formed an § association, pledging themselves to prosecute to death, as far as lay in their power, all those who should attempt anything against the Queen; and this was thought so necessary a measure, that Parliament followed the example. Mary was but too well justified in encouraging the plans which were formed for her deliverance and elevation; nor was it by the sense of her own wrongs only that she was excited to this; a religious motive was superadded. She communicated || with Alva, urging him, while her son was yet young, to devise means for conveying him out of Scotland into Spain, where he might be bred up in the Romish faith. When it was too late for this, and the scheme of marrying her to the Duke of Norfolk had ended in bringing him to the scaffold, a plan was formed between the Pope ¶ and Don John of Austria, that Don John should conquer England by help of the Spaniards, marry her, and become King of Great Britain in her right. In the early years of her imprisonment, the King of ** France said of her, "She will never cease till she lose her head. They will put her to death: it is her own fault and folly." Rather it was her misfortune and her fate.

* Strype's Annals, ii. p. 139.

† Ibid. p. 48.

‡ Ibid. vol. iii. p. 247, 281. Gregory Martin was the author. The printer was executed for this treason.

§ Strype's Annals, iii. p. 217.

|| Ibid. ii. p. 50. The letters were intercepted.

¶ Strada, vol. i. p. 444. Ed. 1640.

** Strype's Annals, ii. p. 50.

Elizabeth's counsellors had long advised that Mary should be put to death : they had obtained full proof of her connexion with schemes of conspiracy and invasion : the people cried out for this, as necessary for the security of the Queen and of the nation ; and Parliament * petitioned, when the sentence had been passed, that it might be carried into effect. Yet it is a disgraceful part of English history. Some who had entered into correspondence with her, endeavoured now to hasten her death, as the surest means of averting suspicion from themselves ; and Elizabeth's conduct was marked by duplicity, which has left upon her memory a lasting stain. Nor is the act itself to be excused or palliated. It was thought at the time to be required by the strongest circumstances of state necessity ; and yet neither the Queen nor the kingdom were more secure when this enemy was removed : the practices against Elizabeth's life were still continued, and a title to the crown was vamped up for the royal family of Spain, which the Seminarists supported by their writings and intrigues.

Elizabeth was at this time engaged in open hostilities with the Spaniards, a course to which the circumstances of Europe had compelled her against her will. Probably she long retained a sense of personal good will towards Philip, for the protection that he had afforded her during her sister's reign : when the war in the Netherlands broke out, she was well aware how dangerous to England it would be, if France should obtain possession of those important provinces ; and the termination which she endeavoured to bring about, as long as there was the slightest hope of effecting it, was that the inhabitants should have the free exercise of their religion secured to them, and return to their obedience. Had Philip listened to her interference, there was nothing, either in the temper or principles of the English Government, which would have prevented a reciprocal toleration here. But religious bigotry made the Spaniards resolve upon a war of extermination in the Low Countries, believing themselves sure of success : and if they had succeeded, the same motive would have directed their efforts against England with additional force, because, with the Protestant government of that kingdom, the Protestant cause must then have been subdued.

There appeared too much reason for apprehending this, after the murder of the Prince of Orange, when the Spaniards, under a general of consummate talents in the art of war, were successful in all their undertakings, and, in the conquest of Antwerp, had

* Strype's Annals, iii. p. 369.

accomplished the greatest military undertaking of modern warfare. Shortly afterwards, two English Papists betrayed their trust in the Netherlands; the one delivering to the Spaniards a fort which he commanded near Zutphen, the other the city of Deventer, of which he was governor, and taking over with him a regiment of 1300 men. The former of these traitors was a ruffian, whose profligate character ought to have disqualified him for any honourable employment; but Sir William Stanley, the latter, acted upon a principle of * conscience; he believed, what the head of his Church proclaimed, that his duty, as an English subject, was incompatible with his duty as a Papist; and, as must always be the case when such duties are supposed to be in opposition to each other, the weakest went to the wall. He was, in all other respects, an honourable man, who had served with singular fidelity and valour: on his part, therefore, this treason was not an act of individual baseness, but the direct consequence of his religious opinions; and as such it was publicly defended, extolled, and held up for a meritorious example, by Cardinal Allen, the person, of all others, whom the English Papists regarded with most respect. The Cardinal and the Pope wrote to Philip, soliciting his favour for Stanley's † regiment of deserters, and saying, that as he already encouraged a seminary of students to pray and write for the furtherance of the Catholic cause in England, so might this regiment, under the command of so worthy and Catholic a person as Sir William Stanley, be made a seminary of soldiers to fight for it. When the great attempt at invasion was made, Allen advised the King of Spain to let the management of the Armada be confided to ‡ English sailors, perfectly acquainted with their own seas and coast; and when he spoke of this in after-years, he used to weep for bitterness, remembering how fatally for the Romish cause his advice had been rejected. It has been said, upon his alleged § authority, that if the invasion had succeeded, and Elizabeth had been taken prisoner, the intention was to send her to Rome, that the Pope might dispose of her as he thought best.

That danger, the greatest with which these kingdoms and the Protestant cause were ever threatened, was met with a spirit such as the emergency required; but it was averted less by any human means, than by the providential || agency of the elements. Unable to wreak their vengeance upon Elizabeth in any more

* Strada, vol. ii. p. 461. (1648).

† Strype's Annals, iii. p. 428.

‡ Strada, vol. ii. p. 576. (Ed. 1648).

§ Strype's Annals, vol. iii. p. 539.

|| "Can we," says South, "forget the deliverance of eighty-eight, and those victorious mercies more invincible than the Armada designed to invade and en-

satisfactory manner, the Romanists gratified it by representing her as a monster of impiety and cruelty. An unnatural * Englishman, who held the office of Professor of Divinity in a Popish university, asserted, that Heaven hated, and Earth persecuted, whatever bore the English name; and, indeed, had the accounts which these slanderers disseminated been true, England would have deserved this universal odium. A book was published at Rome, with prints representing the cruelties practised by the English upon the Papists, because of their religion; one of the punishments being to sew them in bearskins and bait them with dogs. They affirmed that at the dissolution of the monasteries, the religioners were left at the mercy of the mob, any person being allowed to put them to death in any manner, . . . that some were torn to pieces by horses, some crucified, some murdered in prison by forcing hot iron into their eyes and ears; that it was a common practice to expose virgins of noble family in the public stews, if they would not renounce the Romish religion, and that this was done by order of Elizabeth herself: that hymns in praise of Elizabeth were set forth by authority, in place of the praises of the Virgin † Mary, and used in the service of the Church; and that the Queen had a law passed, by which her bastard children were appointed to succeed her. The books ‡ in which these execrable falsehoods were affirmed, were not only licensed, but approved and recommended by the censors of the press, as authentic expositions of the state of England, and the character of the English Queen, and of the English Church.

That Church, and the Queen, its re-founder, are clear of persecution, as regards the Romanists. No Church, no sect, no individual, even, had yet professed the principle of toleration; insomuch that when the English Bishops proposed that certain incorrigible Arians and Pelagians should be confined in some

slave us; when the seas and winds had a command from heaven to fight under the English colours, and to manifest the strength of God in our weakness?" Vol. iv. p. 88. Oxford edition.

* Strype's *Annals*, iii. p. 319. Turner was this man's name, and he was Professor at Ingoldstadt.

† Ribadeneyra, *Hist. Ecc. del Scisma de Inglaterra*, t. i. l. ii. c. 26. p. 170. Lisbon, 1588. It is worthy of notice in connexion with this impudent falsehood of the Jesuit historian, that in the preceding reign, one Stopes actually published "An *Ave Maria* in commenda-

tion of our most virtuous Queen" Mary. — *Ritson's Bibliographia Poetica*, p. 353.

‡ I allude more particularly to the *Historia Ecclesiastica del Scisma del Reyno de Inglaterra*, by the Jesuit Pedro de Ribadeneyra, who, having been in this country during Mary's reign, must have known that the calumny which he propagated concerning Elizabeth's incestuous origin was utterly false;—and to the *Noticias Historicas de las Tres Florentissimas Provincias del Celeste Orden de la Santissima Trinidad, en Inglaterra, Escocia, y Hibernia*, by El. M. R. P. M. Fr. Domingo Lopez.

castle in * North Wales, where they were to be secluded from all intercourse with others, and to live by their own labour, till they should be found to repent their errors, this was an approach to it which the age was not prepared to bear. Some Anabaptists from Holland were apprehended; their wild opinions, and still more their history, had placed this unhappy sect, as it were, under the ban of society, wherever they appeared; they were condemned as heretics; one submitted to an acknowledgment of error, eight were sent out of the country, but two, who were deemed pre-eminently impious, were delivered to the flames. The good old martyrologist, whom Elizabeth, with becoming reverence, used always to call Father Fox, interceded for these poor wretches, and addressed to the Queen † a Latin letter in their behalf. He did not ask that such fanatical sects should be tolerated; nothing, he said, could be more absurd than their foul and portentous errors; they were by no means to be endured, but to be repressed by fit correction. But that the living bodies of these miserable creatures should be destroyed by fire and flame, raging with the strength of pitch and sulphur, . . . this, said he, is more conformable to the cruelty of the Romanists, than to the Gospel. “My nature is such (and this I say of myself, foolishly, perhaps, but truly), that I can hardly pass by the shambles where cattle are slaughtered, without an inward sense of pain and repugnance. And with my whole heart I admire and venerate the mercy of God for this, that, concerning those brute and humble creatures, who were formerly offered in sacrifice, he provided that they should not be burnt, until their blood had been poured out at the foot of the altar. Whence, in exacting just punishment, we may learn that everything must not be permitted to severity; but that the asperity of rigour should be tempered with clemency. Wherefore, if I may venture so far, I entreat your excellent Majesty, for Christ’s sake, that the life of these miserable creatures may be spared, if that be possible (and what is there which is not possible, in such cases, to your Majesty)? . . . at least that this horror may be prevented, and changed into some other kind of punishment. There is imprisonment, there are chains, there is perpetual exile, there are branding and stripes, and even the gibbet; this alone I earnestly deprecate, that you would not suffer the fires of Smithfield, which, under your most happy auspices, have slept so long, to be again rekindled.” He concluded by praying, if he could obtain no more, that a month or two might at least be

§ Strype’s Annals, i. p. 214.

† Fuller, b. ix. p. 104.

granted him, during which it might be tried whether God would give them grace to recover from their perilous errors, lest, with the loss of their bodies, their souls also should be in danger of everlasting destruction. Alas, the latter petition was all that he obtained! A month's reprieve was granted: and the poor creatures, remaining firm in their notions, then suffered the cruel death to which they had been condemned. The excuse which has been offered is, "that Elizabeth was necessitated to this severity, who having formerly executed some traitors, if now sparing these blasphemers, the world would condemn her, as being more earnest in asserting her own safety, than God's honour." A miserable excuse; but it shews how entirely the execution of the Seminarists was regarded as the punishment of treason. Against this crime Father Fox appears to have been the only person who raised his voice. But against the conciliatory system, which the Church and State pursued, a fiercer opposition was made by fanatical Protestants, than by the Papists themselves.

The founders of the English Church were not hasty reformers who did their work in the heat of enthusiasm; they were men of mature judgment and consummate prudence, as well as of sound learning and sincere piety; their aim was in the form and constitution of the Church never to depart unnecessarily from what had been long established; that thus the great body of the Romanists might more easily be reconciled to the transition; and in their articles to use such comprehensive words, as might leave a latitude for different opinions upon disputable points. There had been a dispute among the emigrants at Frankfort, during Mary's reign; it had been mischievously begun, and unwarrantably prosecuted, and its consequences were lamentably felt in England; whither some of the parties brought back with them a predilection for the discipline of the Calvinists, and a rooted aversion for whatever Catholic forms were retained in the English Church. In this, indeed, they went beyond Calvin himself; refusing to tolerate what he had pronounced to be "tolerable* fooleries." The objects of their abhorrence were the square cap, the tippet, and the surplice, which they called conjuring garments of Popery.

Great forbearance was shewn toward the first generation of men, who were disquieted with these pitiful scruples. Regard

* "*Tolerabiles ineptias.* Englished by Williams was wont to say that Master some, says Fuller, *tolerable fooleries*; Calvin had his *tolerabiles morositates*."—more mildly by others, *tolerable unfitnesses*. In requital whereof Bishop *Church History*, b. vii. p. 375.

was had to their otherwise exemplary lives, to their former sufferings, and to the signal services which some of them had rendered to the Protestant cause, for Coverdale, Lever, and Father Fox were among them. These, who neither sought to disturb the order, nor insult the practice of the Church, were connived at for inobservancies, which in them were harmless, because they did not proceed from a principle of insubordination. It was not till several years had elapsed, and strong provocation had repeatedly been given, that any person was silenced for nonconformity. Bishop Grindal entreated Sampson, the Dean of Christ Church, even with tears, that he would only so far conform, as sometimes to wear the cap at public meetings in the University; and the Dean refused as determinately as if he had been called upon to bow the knee to Baal. He was encouraged in this by Leicester's protection. That unprincipled minion favoured the Puritans, because he was desirous of stripping the bishoprics, and securing to himself a portion of the spoils; a design, which he could hope to accomplish by no other means, than by the triumph of this levelling faction. Even a fouler motive may be suspected. At one time, he entertained a project of marrying the Queen of Scots; and afterwards was in hope of obtaining the hand of Elizabeth herself. This latter hope he communicated to the Spanish * ambassador, requesting that the King of Spain would use his influence to promote the match; and pledging himself, if it were effected, to restore the Romish religion in this kingdom. If he seriously entertained this project, no better course of preparation could be followed, than that of weakening and distracting the Church of England.

The proceedings of Elizabeth's Government, both toward Papists and Puritans, were grounded upon these principles, that conscience is not to be constrained, but won by force of truth, with the aid of time, and use of all good means of persuasion; and that cases of conscience, when they exceed their bounds, and grow to be matter of faction, lose their nature: and however they may be coloured with the pretence of religion, are then to be restrained and punished. When the Puritans inveighed against pluralities and non-residence, though the circumstances of the Church, and its extreme impoverishment, rendered inevitable what would otherwise have been an abuse, their zeal was not condemned; and they were long tolerated in their refusal of the habits and some of the ceremonies, with an indulgence, which, if the personal qualities of the first Nonconformists had not been

* Strada, vol. ii. p. 400. Ed. 1648.

considered, would appear to have been carried too far, and used too long. "There are some sins," says Jeremy Taylor, "whose malignity is accidentally increased by the lightness of the subject matter; . . . to despise authority, when the obedience is so easy as the wearing of a garment, or doing of a posture, is a greater and more impudent contempt, than to despise authority imposing a great burden of a more considerable pressure, when human infirmity may tempt to a disobedience, and lessen the crime." The men for whose sake this indulgence was allowed, deserved, and were contented with it. But there were others, in whom the spirit of insubordination was at work; and who, if their first demands had been conceded, would then have protested against the weathercock, made war upon steeples, and required that all churches should be built north and south, in opposition to the superstitious usage of placing them east and west. The habits at first had been the only, or chief matter of contention; all the rites of the Church were soon attacked; and, finally, its whole form and structure. The first questions were, as Hooker * excellently said, "such silly things, that very easiness made them hard to be disputed of in a serious manner;" but he added, with his admirable and characteristic wisdom, "if any marvelled how a thing in itself so weak could import any great danger, they must consider not so much how small the spark is that flieth up, as how apt things about it are to take fire."

The object of the second race of Nonconformists was to eradicate every vestige of the Romish Church, and to substitute such a platform of discipline as Calvin had erected at Geneva: this they called the "pattern in the mount," and they were too hot and hasty to consider that Calvin's scheme was formed with relation to the peculiar circumstances of a petty state. He was invited thither by a turbulent democracy, who, having driven away their bishop and his clergy, had just lived long enough in a state of ecclesiastical anarchy, to feel the necessity of having some discipline established among them. An Episcopal form was not to be thought † of there; nor was there any hope that the people would be satisfied, unless the system which he proposed had at least a democratical appearance. Wisely, therefore, because necessity required that his views should be shaped according to the occasion, he formed a standing ecclesiastical court, of which the ministers were perpetual members, and Calvin himself perpetual president; twice as many of the laity being

* Epist. Ded. to the fifth book.

† Hooker, Preface to his Ecc. Polity.

annually elected as their associates: to this court full power was given to decide all ecclesiastical causes, to inspect all men's manners, and punish, as far as excommunication, all persons of whatsoever rank. That the discipline was of the most morose and inquisitorial kind, . . . the members of the court being empowered to pry into the private affairs of every family, and examine any person concerning his own, or his neighbour's conduct, upon oath, . . . and that the Church of Geneva assumed as high a tone as that of Rome, must be ascribed something to the temper of the times, but more to that of the legislator.

The Genevan scheme had been adopted in Scotland, because Knox was a disciple of Calvin, and because the nobles, to whom that miserable country was a prey, preferred a church government under which they might divide among themselves the whole property of the Church. Its partisans in England proposed the discipline as the only and sure remedy for all the evils of the state, promising, among what Walsingham called "other impossible * wonders," that if it were once planted, there should be neither beggars nor vagabonds in the land. "In very truth," said † Parker, "they are ambitious spirits, and can abide no superiority. Their fancies are favoured of some of great calling, who seek to gain by other men's losses; and most plausible are these men's devices to a great number of the people who labour to live in all liberty. But the one, blinded with the desire of getting, see not their own fall, which no doubt will follow: the other, hunting for alteration, pull upon their necks intolerable servitude. For these fantastical spirits, which labour to reign in men's consciences, will, if they may bring their purposes to pass, lay a heavy yoke upon their necks. In the platform set down by these new builders, we evidently see the spoliation of the patrimony of Christ, and a popular state to be sought. The end will be ruin to religion, and confusion to our country." No great political calamities have ever befallen a civilised state, without being distinctly foreseen and plainly predicted by men wiser than their generation. Elizabeth perceived that the principles of these church-revolutionists were hostile to monarchy: men, she said, who were "over-bold with the Almighty, making too many scannings of his blessed will, as lawyers did with human testaments;" and she declared, that without meaning to encourage the Romanists, she considered these persons more perilous to the state.

The number of nonconforming clergy was but small; when an

* Hacket's Life of Abp. Williams, part ii. p. 146.

† Strype's Parker, p. 433.

account was taken of them by Archbishop Whitgift, * there were found 49 in the province of Canterbury, those who were conformable being 786. "The most ancient," said he, "and best learned, † the wisest, and in effect, the whole state of the clergy of this province do conform themselves; such as are otherwise affected, are in comparison of the rest but few, and most of them young in years, and of unsettled minds:" and he complained how intolerable it was, that "a few men, for the most part young, and of very small reading and study, and some of them utterly unlearned, should oppose themselves to that, which by the most notable and famous men in learning, had been allowed, and in the use whereof God had so wonderfully blessed this kingdom." But the tyrannical disposition of these people, who demanded to be set free from all restraint themselves, was even more intolerable than their presumption. As far as was in their power they separated themselves from the members of the Church, and refused to hold any communion with them. Instances occurred, where they were strong enough, of their thrusting the clergy out of their own churches, if they wore the surplice, and taking away the bread from the communion-table, because it was in the wafer form. Some fanatics ‡ spit in the face of their old acquaintance, to testify their utter abhorrence of conformity. There were refractory clergy who refused to baptize § by any names which were not to be found in the Scriptures; and as one folly leads to another, the scriptural names themselves were laid aside, for such significant appellations as || Deliverance, Discipline, From above, More trial, More fruit, Joy again, Earth, Dust, Ashes, Kill-sin, and Fight-the-good-fight-of-iaith. But it is not in such follies that the spirit of fanaticism rests contented. They boasted in the division which they occasioned, and said it was an especial token, that the work came from God, because Christ had declared ¶ He came not to send peace into the world, but a sword. That sword, it was their evident belief, was to be intrusted to their hands. Their first prayer had been, that the Church might be swept clean; this was sufficiently significant; but when they found that they were not allowed to perform the task of sweeping, they prayed that God would strike through the sides ** of all who went about to deprive his ministers of the liberty which He granted them. A third race arose, who in contumacy and violence exceeded the

* Strype's Whitgift, p. 155.

† Ibid. p. 169.

‡ Strype's Annals, i. p. 460.

§ Strype's Whitgift, p. 229.

|| Heylyn's Hist. of the Presbyterians, p. 293: Strype's Whitgift, p. 124.

¶ Ibid. p. 139.

** Ibid. p. 124.

second, as much as they had out-gone the first. They were for putting in practice the most dangerous maxims, which their predecessors, in the heat of controversy, had thrown out. Because it is better to obey God than man, they proclaimed that if the magistrates would not be persuaded to erect the discipline, they ought, instead of lingering and staying for Parliament, to prosecute the matter with celerity, and erect it themselves. This was a case in which subjects might withstand their Prince; the ministers, after due admonition, might excommunicate him as an enemy to the kingdom of Christ; and being so excommunicated, the people might then punish him. Such doctrines, mingled with the coarsest and foulest ribaldry, were promulgated in ferocious libels; the authors and printers of which long continued to elude and to defy the vigilance of the laws. Hitherto, so long as they had been contented with proposing what they desired, "leaving it to the Providence of God, and to the authority of the magistrates," they had been borne with, except in cases of extreme contempt. But now (they are Walsingham's * words, a minister who was disposed to regard them and their proceedings more favourably than he ought), . . . when they "affirmed that the consent of the magistrate was not to be attended; when they combined themselves by classes and subscriptions; when they descended into that vile and base means of defacing the government of the Church by ridiculous pasquils; when they began to make many subjects in doubt to take an oath (which is one of the fundamental points of justice in this land, and in all places); when they began both to vaunt of their strength † and number of their partisans and followers, and to use comminations that their cause would prevail, though with uproar and violence; then it appeared to be no more zeal, no more conscience, but mere faction and division."

The Act which restored to the Crown its "ancient jurisdiction over the Estate Ecclesiastical and Spiritual," provided that the Sovereign might appoint Commissioners to exercise this jurisdiction; they had authority to inquire into all offences which fell under the ecclesiastical laws, "by the oaths of twelve men, as also by witnesses, and all other ways and means ‡ they could

* Hacket's Life of Abp. Williams, ii. p. 147.

† See Hooker's preface, p. 40.

‡ "That is," says Neal, "by Inquisition, by the rack, by torture, or by any ways and means that forty-four sovereign judges shall invent. Surely this should have been limited to LAWFUL

ways and means."—(Hist. of the Puritans, vol. i. p. 414). And surely this most prejudiced and dishonest of all historians ought to have observed, that it was so limited *twice* in the very commission itself. It is but too true, that the torture was then in use in cases of treason, and that upon that score many of the Romish

devise; to examine offenders upon oath, and punish them by fine or imprisonment, at discretion." These powers, great as they were, were less than those in the place of which they were substituted. They were afterwards grossly abused: but during Elizabeth's reign the practice was less objectionable than the principle. The Church was right in exacting conformity from its ministers, its error was in not permitting men of narrow minds and ricketty consciences to associate and worship after their own way. But the malcontents would not have been satisfied with this. It was not for toleration that they contended, but for the establishment of their own system, under which no toleration would have been allowed. Their demands were founded upon the assumption that they themselves were infallible, and that the system of the Established Church was intolerable. It was the opinion of the greatest statesmen in those days, that uniformity of religion is absolutely necessary to the support of a government; and therefore that toleration cannot be granted to sectaries with safety. The principle of intolerance, indeed, was common to those who exercised authority, and to those who resisted it: and the inevitable consequence was, that contumacy and persecution exasperated each other. Authority, which at first was justly exercised, was provoked to act oppressively; and the opposition, which began in caprice and pertinacious conceit, became respectable and even magnanimous in suffering. The Romanists, seeing the miserable schism which had arisen, looked upon the establishment as a divided, and therefore an unstable Church, and were withheld from joining it, as much by this consideration, and by the extravagance of the sectaries, as by the efforts of their own clergy. Baffled thus in its plans of comprehension and conciliation, the Government had recourse to stronger compulsive measures, not perceiving that persecution never can effect its object, unless it be carried to an extent at which humanity shudders and revolts. The fine for not attending church on Sundays, which had been fixed at twelve pence for each omission, was raised to the enormous sum of twenty pounds per month; and the punishment for writing, printing, or publishing any false, seditious, or slander-

martyrs were put to the rack. But such cases were not within cognisance of this court; they had no authority to use the torture; nor is there the slightest proof, or presumption, that it was ever exercised by them. "If any article did touch the party anyway, either for life, liberty, or scandal, he might refuse to answer: neither was he urged there-

unto." These were Whitgift's words at the Hampton Court conference. What the sufferers under the high commission complained of, was the miserable state of the prisons wherein they were confined; an evil which, to the disgrace of the country, continued with little or no amendment till our own days, and is not yet everywhere removed.

ous matter, to the defamation of the Queen, or to the stirring up of insurrection and rebellion, was made death, as in cases of felony. Some of the men concerned in the libels against the Church, suffered under this statute. More truculent libels never issued from the press; but the punishment exceeded the offence, and therefore inflamed in others the spirit which it was intended to abate. The error of understanding, the presumptuousness of youth, the heat of mind in which such writings originated, time would have corrected; and where there was any generosity of heart, merciful usage would have produced contrition. This effect was, in fact, produced upon Cartwright, who, more than any other individual, had contributed to excite and diffuse the spirit of resistance and dissention. Age sobered him, clemency softened him, experience made him wise, and his latter days were passed in dutiful and peaceful conformity. "In controversies of this kind," says Fuller, "men, when they consult with their gray hairs, begin to abate of their violence." * At his death he lamented the troubles which he had raised in the Church by promoting an unnecessary schism, and wished he could begin his life again, that he might testify how deeply he disapproved his former ways. †

CHAPTER XVI.

JAMES I.

DURING the last years of Elizabeth's reign the Puritans remained quiet: they saw that the state was resolved to make the clergy conform to the institutions of their church: their libels were put down less by the severity of the law than by a set of writers who replied to them with equal scurrility and more wit; and they lived in hope, that upon Elizabeth's death an order of things more conformable to their views would be established by a king who had been bred up in Presbyterian principles. The Romanists also looked with equal expectations to the new reign. They reminded ‡ King James of his mother's prayers, that he might be such as they most desired; and they assured him that they rejoiced at his accession no otherwise than the Christians in old times had done upon the entrance of Constantine into the empire after Diocletian, § or of Jovian after Julian. These half-hearted

* Fuller, book ix. p. 3.

† Strype's Whitgift, p. 554.

‡ Father Parson's Three Conver-

sions. Addition to the Epistle Dedicatory.

§ Ibid.

Englishmen rejoiced at Elizabeth's death; but never had any sovereign reigned more to his own honour, or to the advantage of his subjects; and so sensible was the sound part of the nation of the benefits which it had derived from her wise and happy government, that pictures of her monument were hung up "in most London and many country churches, every parish being proud of the shadow of her tomb;"* and the anniversary of her accession was for some generations observed as a holy-day throughout the kingdom.

James had been too well educated by Buchanan ever to be ensnared in the toils of Romish sophistry; he was but half a King to the Papists, he said, being lord over their bodies, while their souls were the Pope's: and there could be no continued obedience where there was not true religion. He came also armed with sound learning against the speculative errors of Puritanism, and with no predilection for its discipline, for he had both seen and felt its practical consequences. Once when ambassadors from France were about to leave his court, and he had desired the magistrates of Edinburgh to give them a feast before their departure, the ministers of that city proclaimed a fast for the day appointed; and to detain the people at church, the three ordinary preachers delivered sermons in St Giles's one after another, denouncing curses on those who obeyed the King on that occasion, and threatening the magistrates with excommunication. A rabid preacher had even from the pulpit denounced against the King himself by name, the curse which fell on Jeroboam, that he should die childless and be the last of his race. The friends of the Establishment had looked to the new reign with uneasy apprehensions, dreading what they called the Scotch mist; but James was a person who liked fair weather, and on his arrival in England he soon perceived that he was got into a better climate.

The Puritans, like all factious minorities, endeavoured by activity to make amends for their want of numbers. They exerted themselves to get men of their opinions returned to Parliament; they set forth books, and presented what they called the humble petition of the Thousand Ministers (though the subscription fell short of that amount by some hundreds), desiring that the offences in the Church might be some removed, some amended, and some qualified; offering to shew that what they complained of as abuses were not agreeable to the Scriptures, if the King would be pleased to have the point discussed either in

* Fuller, b. ix. p. 5.

writing or by conference among the learned. The true sons of the Church were not idle at this juncture: both universities disclaimed the petition, and Oxford in its answer represented to the King how inconvenient and insufferable it was in Christian policy to permit a long and well-settled state of government to be so much as questioned, much more to be altered for a few of his subjects; especially considering the matter pretended to be the cause of these men's griefs and of their desired reformation, unjustly so called. James, however, was induced, as much by inclination as a sense of duty, to permit the proposed conference; and accordingly it was held before the privy-council at Hampton Court, the King himself presiding as moderator, four of the Puritan clergy being summoned as representatives of the Mille-naries, for so the petitioners were called.

On the first day James conferred with the bishops and some of the deans who were summoned with them. He had not called that assembly, he said, for any innovation, for as yet he saw no cause to change, but rather to confirm what was well settled. Yet because nothing can be so absolutely ordered but that something may be added thereunto, and corruption in any state will insensibly grow either through time or persons, . . . and because he had received many complaints of many disorders, and much disobedience to the laws, with a great falling away to Popery, . . . his purpose was, like a good physician, to examine and try the complaints; and fully to remove the occasions thereof, if scandalous, . . . cure them, if dangerous, . . . and take knowledge of them, if but frivolous; thereby to cast a sop to Cerberus, that he might bark no more. And he had called them in severally, that if anything should be found meet to be redressed, it might be done without visible alteration. There were some points concerning the Book of Common Prayer and the Service of the Church wherein he desired to be satisfied. They related to confirmation, . . . that name seeming to imply that baptism is of no validity without it; he abhorred this opinion, and the abuse which made it a sacrament; to absolution, which he had heard likened to the Pope's pardon; and to private baptism, which if it meant that any beside a lawful minister might baptize, he utterly disliked. Upon the two first points the bishops fully satisfied the King: upon the third he retained his objection to the custom which allowed midwives or other persons to administer baptism in case of necessity; and the bishops were ordered to consult, whether in the rubrick which then left it indifferently to all, the words *curate* or *lawful minister* might

not be inserted. He propounded also, whether the name of ex-communication might not be altered in cases of less moment, and whether some other mode of coercion might not be substituted; and to this the bishops easily assented, as a thing which had been often and long desired.

The Puritans were called in on the second day, and Dr Reynolds as their spokesman stated, all they required might be reduced to these four heads, that the doctrine of the Church might be preserved in purity, according to God's Word; that good pastors might be planted in all churches to preach the same; that the Church government might be sincerely ministered, according to God's Word; and that the Book of Common Prayer might be fitted to more increase of piety. Concerning the first point, he requested that the Articles of the Church might be explained where obscure, and enlarged where defective. The purport of this was, that they might be made decidedly Calvinistic, for which end he would have had it asserted that the elect can never totally or finally fall from a state of grace, and would have inserted nine propositions, known by the name of the Lambeth Articles, because they had there been sanctioned by Archbishop Whitgift, for the purpose of terminating a controversy at Cambridge; but they had never been set forth by authority; on the contrary, they had displeased Elizabeth and Burleigh, who justly observed that such tenets charge God with cruelty, and might cause men to be desperate in their wickedness. Secondly, where the Articles said it is not lawful for any in the congregation to preach before he is lawfully called; he wished something to be altered, because the words seemed to imply that one who was not of the congregation, might preach without such a call. And thirdly, he objected to an apparent contradiction, concerning confirmation, which in one place, he said, was allowed to be a depraved imitation of the Apostles, and in another, was grounded on their example.

Upon this, Bancroft, the Bishop of London, reminded the King of the ancient canon which declared that schismatics were not to be heard against bishops; and of the decree of an ancient council, that no man should be admitted to speak against what he had formerly subscribed. He told the Puritan disputants they were beholden to the King's clemency, for allowing them, contrary to the statute, to speak thus freely against the Liturgy and discipline established. "Fain," said he, "would I know the end you aim at; and whether you be not of Mr Cartwright's mind, who affirmed that we ought in ceremonies to conform to

the Turks rather than the Papists. I doubt you approve his position, because here appearing before his Majesty in Turkey gowns, not in your scholastic habits." This rebuke they well deserved; but James reproved the interruption. "My Lord Bishop," said he, "something in your passion I may excuse, and something I must mislike. I may excuse you thus far, that I think you have just cause to be moved, in respect that they traduce the well settled government, and also proceed in so indirect a course, contrary to their own pretence, and the intent of this meeting. I mislike your interruption of Dr Reynolds, whom you should have suffered to have taken his liberty. . . . Either let him proceed, or frame your answer to his motions already made, although some of them are very needless."

Bancroft then replied to the observation upon falling from grace: there were many, he said, in those days, who neglected holiness of life, presuming on persisting in grace upon predestination: a desperate doctrine, contrary to good divinity, wherein we should reason rather by ascending than descending, . . . from our obedience to God, and love of our neighbour, to our election. The King said he approved the words of the Article, as consonant to those of the Apostle, "work out your salvation with fear and trembling;" and he desired that the question of predestination might be tenderly handled, lest, on the one hand, God's omnipotence be questioned, or, on the other, a desperate presumption arreared by inferring the necessary certainty of persisting in grace.

The contradiction concerning confirmation, which Reynolds had imputed to the Articles, the King, upon examination, pronounced a mere cavil; with regard to the rite itself, Bancroft observed that Dr Reynolds and his party were vexed the use of it was not in their own hands, for every pastor to confirm in his own parish; and this was admitted on their part. The Bishop of Winchester then asked Reynolds, with all his learning, to shew him when confirmation was used in ancient times, by any other but bishops; and the King declared it was not his intention to take from them what they had so long enjoyed. "I approve," said he, "the calling and use of bishops in the Church; and it is my aphorism, No bishop no king."

The next objection was, that the Articles, in saying the Bishop of Rome had no authority in this land, were not sufficient, unless it were added, "nor ought to have any." To this the King properly replied, "inasmuch as it said he hath not, it is plain enough that he ought not to have." This frivolous objection

led to what is termed some pleasant discourse between James and the Lords about the Puritans, and Bancroft reminded the King of what Sully had said upon seeing the service of the English Church, that if the Reformed Churches of France had kept the same order, there would have been thousands of Protestants more. Reynolds now proposed it might be added to the Articles, that the intention of the minister is not of the essence of the sacrament; a motion which the King said he utterly disliked, thinking it unfit to thrust into the Articles every *position negative*, which would swell the book into a volume as big as the Bible, and confound the reader. In this way, he said, one M. Craig in Scotland, with his multiplied *detestations* and *abrenunciations*, had so perplexed and amazed simple people, that they fell back to Popery, or remained in their former ignorance. If bound to this form, "the confession of my faith must be in my table-book, not in my head." "Because you speak of intention," he added, "I will apply it thus. If you come hither with a good intention to be informed, the whole work will sort to the better effect. But if your intention be to go as you came (whatsoever shall be said), it will prove the intention is very material and essential to the end of the present action."

I request, said Dr Reynolds, that one uniform catechism may be made, and none other generally received. A request which the King pronounced very reasonable; "yet so," he added, "that the catechism be made in the fewest and plainest terms, not like the many ignorant catechisms in Scotland, set forth by every one who was the *son of a good man*. And herein I would have two rules observed: first, that curious and deep questions be avoided in the *fundamental instruction* of a people; secondly, that there should not be so general a departure from the Papists, that everything should be accounted an error wherein we agree with them." Reynolds complained that the Sabbath was profaned, and requested that the Bible might be new translated. The King assented to this, saying that no English translation was good, but that of Geneva was the worst; and he noticed the tendency of the marginal notes in that Bible, one of which allowed of disobedience to kings, and another censured King Asa, for only deposing his mother for idolatry, instead of killing her. But he added, "Surely if these were the greatest matters that grieved you, I need not have been troubled with such importunate complaints!" The next request of Reynolds was, that unlawful and seditious books might be suppressed, meaning those of the Romanists: he was answered that the Bishop of

London had done what he could to suppress them ; but that certain controversial ones between the Secular priests and the Jesuits, were permitted for the purpose of fomenting the division between them ; and also because in those books the pretended title of Spain to this kingdom was confuted ; and it appeared in them by the testimony of the priests themselves, that the Papists, who were put to death in this country, suffered not for conscience only, but for treason.

Reynolds came now to his second general point, and desired that learned ministers might be planted in every parish. James replied that the bishops were willing, but it could not immediately be done, the universities not affording them. "And yet," said he, "they afford more learned men than the realm doth maintenance, which must be first provided. In the meantime, ignorant ministers, if young, and there be no hope of amendment, are to be removed ; if old, their death must be expected." The Bishop of Winchester remarked, that lay patrons were a great cause of the evil which was complained of ; for if the bishop refused to admit the clerks whom they presented, he was presently served with a *Quare impedit*. Bancroft then knelt, and begged that as it was a time of moving petitions, he might move two or three to his Majesty : and first he requested that there might be a praying ministry, it being now come to pass that men thought it was the only duty of ministers to spend their time in the pulpit. I like your motion exceeding well, replied the King, and dislike the hypocrisy of our times, who place all their religion in the ear, while prayer (so requisite and acceptable if duly performed) is accounted as the least part of religion. Bancroft's second motion was, that till learned men could be planted in every congregation, the homilies might be read ; the King approved this also, especially where the living was not sufficient to maintain a learned preacher ; and the Puritan divines expressed their assent. The Chancellor, Lord Ellesmere, objected to pluralities, saying, he wished some might have single coats, before others had doublets. Bancroft admitted the general principle, but said a doublet was necessary in cold weather. His last motion was, that pulpits might not be made pasquils, wherein every discontented fellow might traduce his superiors. "The pulpit is no place of personal reproof," said the King. "Let them complain to me if injured ; first to the Ordinary, from him to the Archbishop, from him to the Lords of the Council, and if in all these no remedy be found, then to myself."

After this episode, Dr Reynolds requested that subscription

might not be exacted as heretofore; "many good men," he said, "being unwilling to subscribe because the Apocrypha was enjoined to be read in the churches, although some chapters therein were repugnant to Scripture." The King desired him to note those chapters and bring them to the primate, saying he would have none read in the church wherein any error was contained. A wretched cavil against subscription was next made, because in the Dominical Gospels it was twice set down, Jesus said to his disciples, where it appears by the original context that he spake to the Pharisees. "Let the word *Disciples* be omitted," said the King, "and the words *Jesus said* be printed in a different letter." Mr Knewstubs now spake for the Puritans, and objected to the baptismal service. He instanced the cross in baptism, whereat, said he, the weak brethren are offended contrary to the counsel of the Apostle. "How long will such brethren be weak?" replied the King. "Are not forty-five years sufficient for them to grow strong in? Besides, who pretends this weakness? We require not subscriptions of laicks and idiots, but of preachers and ministers, who are not still (I trow) to be fed with milk, being enabled to feed others. Some of them are strong enough, if not headstrong; conceiving themselves able to teach him who last spake for them, and all the bishops of the land." The antiquity of the use of the cross as a significant sign was shewn, and the power of the Church to institute such ceremonies was asserted; but Knewstubs observed, the greatest scruple was, how far the ordinance of the Church bindeth, without impeaching Christian liberty?

This was coming to the point; and James, who had hitherto behaved with his characteristic good nature, warmly replied, "I will not argue that point with you, but answer as Kings in Parliament, *Le Roy s'avisera*. This is like M. John Black, a beardless boy, who told me the last conference in Scotland, that he would hold conformity with his Majesty, in matters of doctrine, but every man for ceremonies was to be left to his own liberty. But I will have none of that! I will have one doctrine, one discipline, one religion in substance and in ceremony. Never speak more to that point, how far you are bound to obey!" Here Reynolds interposed, with a wish that the cross were abandoned as the brazen serpent had been destroyed by Hezekiah, because it had been abused to idolatry. "Inasmuch as the cross was abused to superstition, in time of Popery," replied the King, "it doth plainly imply that it was well used before. I detest their courses who peremptorily disallow of all things which

have been abused to Popery ; and I know not how to answer the objections of the Papists, when they charge us with novelties, but by telling them we retain the primitive use of things, and only forsake their novel corruptions. . . . Material crosses to which people fell down in time of Popery (as the idolatrous Jews to the brazen serpent), are already demolished."

"I take exception," quoth Knewstubs, "at the surplice, a garment used by the priests of Isis." "I thought till of late," replied James, returning to his good nature, "it had been a rag of Popery. Seeing that we border not upon Heathens now, neither are any of them conversant with, or commorant amongst us, thereby to be confirmed in Paganism, I see no reason but for comeliness-sake it may be continued." . . . "I take exception," said Dr Reynolds, "at these words in the marriage service, 'with my body I thee worship.'" James made answer, "I was made believe the phrase imported no less than Divine adoration, but find it an usual English term, as when we say a gentleman of worship ; and it agreeth with the Scriptures, giving honour to the wife. As for you, Dr Reynolds," with a smile, he continued, "many men speak of Robin Hood, who never shot in his bow. If you had a good wife yourself, you would think all worship and honour you could do her were well bestowed." . . . It was then observed, that objections were made to the ring in marriage : Reynolds said "he approved it well enough, but that some took exceptions at the churching of women ;" upon which the King remarked, "that women being loath of themselves to come to church, he liked that, or any other occasion to draw them thither." "My last exception," said the Doctor, "is against committing ecclesiastical censures to Lay-Chancellors : " James replied, "he had conferred with his bishops upon that point, and such order should be taken therein as was convenient : " and he bade him proceed to some other matters.

Reynolds then desired that the clergy might have meetings every three weeks, first in rural deaneries, where he wished to have those discussions of scriptural and theological questions by way of exercise, called prophesyings, which Elizabeth had wisely suppressed as being schools of disputation and seminaries of schism : such things as could not be resolved there, he proposed should be referred to the archdeacon's visitations, and so by a further appeal, if needed, to the Episcopal Synod. "If you aim at a Scottish Presbytery," replied the King, "it agreeth as well with monarchy as God and the devil. Then Jack and Tom, and Will and Dick, shall meet and censure me and my council.

Therefore I reiterate my former speech, *Le Roy s'avisera*. Stay, I pray, for one seven years before you demand that! and then if you find me grow pursy and fat, I may, perchance, hearken unto you, for that Government will keep me in breath, and give me work enough. I shall speak of one matter more, somewhat out of order, but it skilleth not. Dr Reynolds, you have often spoken for my supremacy, and it is well: but know you any here, or elsewhere, who like of the present government ecclesiastical, and dislike my supremacy?" Reynolds replied that he knew none. "Why, then," continued James, "I will tell you a tale. After that the religion established by King Edward VI. was soon overthrown by Queen Mary, we in Scotland felt the effect of it. For thereupon, M. Knox writes to the Queen Regent (a virtuous and moderate lady), telling her that she was the Supreme Head of the Church; and charged her, as she would answer it at God's tribunal, to take care of *Christ his evangel*, in suppressing the Popish prelates who withstood the same. But how long, trow you, did this continue? Even till by her authority the Popish bishops were repressed, and Knox with his adherents, being brought in, made strong enough. Then began they to make small account of her supremacy, when, according to that *more light* wherewith they were illuminated, they made a further reformation of themselves. How they used the poor lady my mother, is not unknown, and how they dealt with me in my minority. I thus apply it! My lords the bishops, I may thank you that these men plead thus for my supremacy! They think they cannot make their party good against you, but by appealing unto it; but if once you were out and they in, I know what would become of my supremacy, for No bishop, no king. I have learned of what cut they have been, who, preaching before me since my coming into England, passed over with silence my being supreme governor in causes ecclesiastical. . . . Well, Doctor, have you anything else to say?" Reynolds replied, "No more, if it please your Majesty." Then said the King, "If this be all your party hath to say, I will make them conform, or harrie them out of the land, . . . or else do worse!"

On the following day such alterations (if so they may be called) in the Liturgy as the King had assented to, were laid before him and approved. They were as trifling as the objections which had been offered. Absolution was defined by the words remission of sins. To the confirmation of children, the word examination was added; and in the Dominical Gospels, Jesus said to them, was twice substituted for Jesus said to his

disciples. Private baptism was only to be performed by lawful ministers ; no part of the Apocrypha which appeared repugnant to the canonical Scripture was to be read. Some limitation of the bishop's jurisdiction was to be made ; and excommunication, as it was then used, to be taken away both in name and nature, instead of which, a writ out of Chancery was to be framed for punishing the contumacious. Schools and preachers were to be provided where they were needed, as soon as might be ; and where pluralities were allowed, which was to be as seldom as possible, the livings were to be near each other, and the incumbent was to maintain a preacher at the one which he did not serve himself. One catechism was to be made and used in all places, and order to be taken for a uniform translation of the Bible. These points having been settled, the King inquired into the complaints against the High Court of Commission, namely, that the persons named in the Commission were too many and too mean, and the matters which were brought before them, base, and such as the Ordinaries might censure at home. To this Whitgift replied that it was requisite their number should be many, and that there should be some persons among them whose attendance he might command in the absence of the Lords of the Council, Bishops, and Judges, otherwise he should often be forced to sit alone. Touching the business of the matters which were brought before them, he had often complained, but could not remedy it : for though the offence were small, the offender oftentimes was so great and contumacious, that the Ordinary dared not punish him, and so was forced to crave help at the High Commission. It was complained that the branches granted out by the bishops, in their several dioceses, were too frequent and too large ; Whitgift admitted this, and said they had often been granted against his will, and generally without his knowledge. He vindicated the High Court from the charge of proceeding like the Inquisition. And James declared his opinion that reports and scandals were to be looked to by ecclesiastical courts, and yet great moderation was to be used therein. He then spoke concerning the necessity and use of the oath *ex officio*, so much in accord with those who heard him, that Whitgift said undoubtedly he spake by the special assistance of the Spirit ; and Bancroft protested his heart melted with joy that God in his mercy had given them a King whose like had never been seen in Christendom. The language of gross adulation had long been common in the English Court ; Elizabeth's courtiers were hardly conscious of servility when they addressed it to a

woman; they transferred it habitually to her successor; and when the prelates used it on this occasion, unworthy as it may well appear to us, it proceeded as much from habit as from delight at finding the King's opinion upon Church government, which had been greatly doubted, in such entire conformity with their own.

The Puritan representatives were now called in, and the alterations in the Liturgy were shewn them, to which they assented in silence. "I see," said James, "the exceptions against the communion book are matters of weakness; therefore, if the reluctant persons be discreet, they will be won betimes and by good persuasions; if indiscreet, better they were removed, for by their factions many are driven to the Papists. From you, Dr Reynolds, and your associates, I expect obedience and humility, the marks of honest and good men: and that you would persuade others by your example." Reynolds replied, "We do here promise to perform all duties to bishops as reverend fathers, and to join with them against the common adversary, for the quiet of the Church." One of his colleagues requested that the surplice and the use of the cross might not be forced on certain godly ministers in Lancashire, lest many whom they had won by their preaching should revolt to Popery. The King made answer, "It is not my purpose, and I dare say it is not the bishops' intent, presently, and out of hand, to enforce these things without fatherly admonitions, conferences, and persuasions premised. But I wish it were examined whether such Lancashire ministers by their pains and preaching have converted any from Popery, and withal be men of honest life and quiet conversation. If so, let letters be written to the Bishop of Chester, that some favour may be afforded them." Upon this Bancroft remarked that the copy of those letters would fly all over England, all nonconformists would make the like request, and instead of any fruit following from this conference, things would be worse than they were before. He desired, therefore, that a time might be limited within which they should conform, and the King signified his assent. Mr Knewstubs then requested the like forbearance toward some honest ministers in Suffolk, "for it will make much against their credits in the country," said he, "to be now forced to the surplice, and the cross in baptism."—"Nay, sir!" said Whitgift, beginning to reply, . . . when James interrupted him, saying, "Let me alone to answer him. Sir, you shew yourself an uncharitable man! We have here taken pains, and in the end have concluded on unity and uniformity; and you, forsooth,

must prefer the credits of a few private men before the peace of the Church. This is just the Scotch argument when anything was concluded which disliked some humours. Let them either conform themselves shortly, or they shall hear of it!" Some improprieties on the part of the nonconformists were noticed by Cecil and Bancroft, but James said, "No more hereof for the present, seeing they have jointly promised to be quiet and obedient." And there the conferences ended, "wherein," says Fuller, "how discreetly the King carried himself, posterity, out of the reach of flattery, is the most competent judge."

The Puritans disowned their representatives when they found how the conference had concluded. They complained that the ministers who had appeared for them were not of their own choosing; that they had argued as if the ceremonies to which they objected were indifferent instead of sinful, had barely propounded the points in controversy which they brought forward, and had wholly omitted others. The conference, however, was not useless; it shewed how insignificant the objections were which the most discreet and learned of their party could advance when they were called upon to state them; and it produced a new translation of the Bible, upon which seven and forty of the most learned men in England were employed, Reynolds and one of his colleagues being of the number. They were instructed to keep as close to the version then in use, as was consistent with fidelity to the original. A truly admirable translation was thus completed, wherein, after the great advances which have been made in oriental and biblical learning, no error of main importance has been discovered. Minor ones inevitably there are; and whenever it may be deemed expedient, after this example, to correct them, we may trust that the diction will be preserved in all other parts with scrupulous veneration, and that no attempt will be made to alter what it is impossible to improve.

The marriage of the clergy, which Elizabeth had reluctantly suffered, but never could be persuaded to legitimate, was made lawful now by reviving the statute of Edward VI.: and an effectual stop was put to the alienation of church lands by an act, whereby all grants or leases of such to any person, even the King himself, for more than one and twenty years, were declared void. James was, indeed, sincerely desirous of promoting the welfare of the Church. At his instigation F. Paolo Sarpi composed that admirable history of the Council of Trent, and by which the intrigues and secret springs of that assembly were laid open by one of the best and wisest members of the Romish communion;

and by his means that most important work was given to the world. And when the first national synod of the Protestants was held at Dort, it was owing to the influence of the English * divines, that its sanction was not given to the monstrous doctrine of the Supralapsarians. The proceedings of the synod were sufficiently disgraceful without coming to such a conclusion; nevertheless, the abominable doctrine that the Almighty has placed the greater part of mankind under a fatal necessity of committing the offences for which He has predetermined to punish them eternally, from that time lost ground. But it became the distinguishing tenet of the nonconformists; it increased their strength, because those clergy who agreed with them at first in this point alone, gradually became political, as well as doctrinal Puritans; and it exasperated the implacable spirit of dissent, by filling them with a spiritual pride as intolerant as it was intolerable; for fancying that they were the favourites and elect of the Almighty, they looked upon all who were not with them as the reprobate; and presuming that heaven was theirs by sure inheritance, they were ready on the first opportunity to claim the earth also by the same title.

If few men have been betrayed into greater faults than James by mere facility of temper, there are few whom posterity has so unjustly depreciated. His talents were quick and lively, his understanding sound, and his acquirements such as fairly entitled him to a place among the learned men of a learned age. As he grew older he perceived wherein his opinions had been erroneous, and he was not ashamed to acknowledge and act upon the conviction of his maturer mind. He had written a treatise upon demonology; and yet in consequence of what he afterwards observed, and the discovery of many impostures which were detected by his sagacity, he was perhaps the first person who shook off the superstitious belief of witchcraft, and openly proclaimed its falsehood.† He had been bred up in Calvinism, and therefore at one time regarded the Arminian opinions with abhorrence: upon this point also his mind underwent a salutary change; and perceiving that the discussion tended to promote anything, rather than devotion and charity, he enjoined all preachers to abstain from such perilous and unprofitable questions; but in this instance his authority proved as inefficient as that of the Papacy, when it was exerted afterwards with the same intent. He had been taught, like all his contemporaries, to believe that heresy was high treason against the Almighty,

* Mosheim, iv. p. 498.

† Fuller, Cent. xvii. p. 74.

and therefore to be punished with death. But when a Socinian had suffered martyrdom in Smithfield, and one, who seems rather to have been crazed than heretical, at Lichfield, James perceived that such executions were impolitic, and though his abhorrence of the offence was not abated, felt also that they outraged the heart of man. A Spanish Arian, therefore, who had been condemned to the same dreadful death, was left in prison as long as he lived; and if other cases of the like kind had occurred, it was the King's intention never to make another martyr.*

If he had proposed to repeal the law, an outcry would have been raised by zealots at home; and Protestants, as well as Romanists abroad, would have regarded it as a scandal in the English Church. The principle of toleration was acknowledged nowhere; that which existed in France was only an armed truce, during which both parties retained their implacable animosity against each other. In this respect, James was advanced beyond his country and his age. He saw in the Romish Church much that ought for ever to prevent its re-establishment in these kingdoms, but nothing for which the bonds of Christian charity ought to be broken: and if his desires and purposes had not been frustrated by the temper of the nation, and the spirit of the times, England would then have been placed upon that just footing with Rome, and with the Popish parts of Christendom, from which the Protestant cause would have had everything to hope, and nothing to fear.

Hostile as the nation was to these conciliatory views, its vindictive feelings toward the Papists were violently exasperated by the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot. That atrocious treason was devised by a few bigots, who had become furious, when their hopes of bringing about a Spanish invasion were frustrated by the peace with Spain. The English Catholics, as a body, were innocent of it; but the opprobrium which it brought upon their Church was not unjust, because Guy Fawkes and his associates acted upon the same principles as the head of that Church, when, in his arrogated infallibility, he fulminated his Bulls against Elizabeth, struck medals in honour of the Bartholomew massacre, and pronounced that the friar who assassinated Henri III., had performed "a famous and memorable act, not without the special providence of God, and the suggestion and assistance of his Holy Spirit!" The ringleaders were not men of desperate fortunes, but of family and condition,

* Fuller, Cent. xvii. p. 64.

some of them possessed of rank and affluence, and actually enjoying the King's favour. If they had felt any compunctious scruples, the sanction of their ghostly fathers quieted all doubts; and when one of their confessors, the Jesuit Garnet, suffered for his share in the treason, it was pretended that a portrait of the sufferer was miraculously formed by his blood upon the straw with which the scaffold was strewn; the likeness was miraculously multiplied; a print of the wonder with suitable accompaniments was published at Rome; Garnet in consequence received the honour of beatification from the Pope, and the society to which he belonged enrolled him in their books as a martyr.*

The Parliament thought it necessary upon this discovery that an oath of allegiance should be required from every Papist; the Pope forbade them to take it, as being injurious to his authority, and therefore destructive to their own souls. It was, however, taken without apparent scruple or reluctance; but Romish writers, of the first eminence abroad, maintained the Papal pretensions in their whole extent: and the Protestants were thus confirmed in their well-founded opinion, that the doctrine of equivocation which was publicly taught by the Romish casuists, and the belief of the Pope's absolute power, rendered it impossible to confide in the oaths of men, whose consciences were not in their own keeping. The effect was injurious to all parties, and deeply so to the nation. It frustrated the conciliatory views of a good-natured King, and a wise administration: and it strengthened that acrimonious faction, whose sole ground of quarrel with the Church of England was, that it had not separated as widely as possible from the Romanists in all forms and ceremonies. But the growth of that faction confirmed the Romanists in their attachment to the old superstition, with all its enormities and errors; for they, who seeing the moderation, the decorum, and the stability of the Establishment, might gradually, like so many others, have been drawn within its pale, were deterred when they saw its moderation reproached, its decorum insulted, and its stability threatened. They apprehended, with too much reason, that the temper which had occasioned so utterly unwarrantable a schism would lead to the wildest anarchy of fanatical opinions; and they adhered, therefore, the more tenaciously to a church which was liable to no such danger.

Bancroft, who succeeded Whitgift in the primacy, pursued the proper course of ejecting from their benefices all such minis-

* Fuller, b. x. p. 41.

ters as would not conform to the rules of the Church. They were few in number, and yet this was complained of as one of the most grievous persecutions recorded in history! Had Bancroft confined himself to this, acting uniformly upon the plain principle, that they who entered into the service of the Church were bound to observe its institutions, his conduct would have been equally politic and just. A minister estimable in all respects, saving that he troubled himself and others with those busy scrupulosities which were the disease of the party, told him in private, that it went against his conscience to conform, and therefore he must submit to be deprived. Bancroft asked him how then he would be able to subsist? He replied, "that nothing remained, but to put himself on Divine Providence, and go a begging." . . . "You shall not need that," the Primate answered, "come to me, and I will take order for your maintenance." There was a spirit of true benevolence in this, that might have prevailed with tempers which no rigour could subdue. But Bancroft had neither the wisdom nor the moderation of Parker and Whitgift. He framed canons by which all persons who spoke in derogation of the Church of England, either as related to its doctrine or discipline, were to be excommunicated *ipso facto*. The laws against libels were already too severe. And with an impolicy gross as his intolerance, when several Puritan families migrated to Virginia, that they might form a Church there, according to their own opinions, and great numbers were preparing to follow them; this imprudent Primate, instead of rejoicing that so many intractable spirits were willing to transport themselves out of the country, obtained a proclamation whereby they were forbidden to leave it without a special licence from the King.

Bancroft's rigour was less injurious to the Church than the counter-conduct of his successor Abbot; a man who, inclining to the Puritans, first because he sympathised with them as a Calvinist, and afterwards as a malecontent, connived at nonconformity. Bancroft had nearly succeeded in weeding out the discontented ministers, who sought to subvert the Church in whose service they had engaged; under Abbot's patronage they became numerous enough to form a formidable party, and to perceive that success was within reach as well as hope. At the same time the temper with which he acted in the High Commission, gave just cause of general offence. Whitgift had left only eight causes in that Court: during Abbot's primacy they increased more than an hundred-fold, and as more causes were unwisely brought under its cognisance, greater severity was shewn toward

the offenders. It had been Bancroft's practice, gravely to admonish and reprove, but to pass mild sentences; under Abbot, whose disposition was as austere as his opinions, enormous fines were imposed; and thus a tribunal, which the ablest of British statesmen had deemed it necessary to establish, and of which, while it was administered according to the spirit of its institution, none but the guilty stood in fear, became a reproach to the state, and a grievance to the subject.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHARLES I.—TRIUMPH OF THE PURITANS.

THE condition of the Church at James's death was, to all outward appearance, flourishing as its truest friends could have desired. It was looked upon as the head of the Reformed churches, honoured by foreign Protestants, and dreaded by the enemies of the Reformation. The world did not contain men of stronger talents, sounder learning, and more exemplary lives, than were to be found among its ministers; their worth was soon to be tried and proved in the furnace of adversity, and their works have stood, and will continue to stand, the test of time. They had maintained their cause with consummate ability against the Papists on one hand, and the Puritans on the other; and their triumph was as complete as their cause was good. But it is not by reason that such struggles are terminated. A fatal crisis, both for the Church and State, was drawing on. The danger, from the time when the Puritans commenced their systematic opposition to the Establishment, had been distinctly foreseen and foretold; but the circumstances which brought on the catastrophe were not to be averted by human foresight.

James had been forced into an impolitic war by a popular clamour, which his unworthy favourite had fomented. That favourite maintained his ascendancy when Charles succeeded to a war, conducted as feebly as it had been rashly undertaken, and to an exhausted treasury. The House of Commons refused supplies for a contest which was of their own seeking; and thus at the commencement of his reign Charles unexpectedly found himself at variance with his Parliament. His accession had taken place at one of those critical periods to which the political, as well as the human body is subject. The Commons possessed

no real power or influence long after they were recognised as one of the three estates of the realm. Even when the power of the feudal nobility had been broken, some generations elapsed before they became sensible of their strength. They had crouched at the feet of Henry VIII. Elizabeth with a high hand repressed their rising spirit ; but even Elizabeth might have failed in this, if her personal qualities and the uniform wisdom of her government had not imposed upon them a profound and well-deserved respect, and if the nation had not been sensible of the blessings which they enjoyed under her singularly favoured reign. Under James, who was not more arbitrary in principle than he was flexible in temper, they began to feel and exercise their power : and when Charles succeeded, they were in a disposition to abuse it.

A crisis had arrived at which it might have been possible, had there been prudence on both sides, to have defined and balanced the constitution, without a struggle. The needful political reform might have been accomplished with less difficulty than had attended our religious Reformation, because there was less evil to be corrected. Some grievances there were which cried aloud for redress, some vexations which might easily have been removed, and in redressing them the Government would have acquired both popularity and strength. But the men by whom popular opinion was directed aimed at more than this, and Charles was surrounded by counsellors, of whom some were weak and others treacherous. He used to say it was better to be deceived than to distrust ; this opinion he inherited from his father, whose maxim it was that suspicion is the disease of a tyrant. Charles distrusted no one so much as himself ; and to that infirmity of purpose it was owing that he did not make himself an absolute king, after it was rendered impossible for him to govern as a constitutional one. He had nearly succeeded, when, having gained over to his service one of the best and ablest leaders of the popular party, he tried the experiment of governing without a Parliament, and raising, by his own prerogative, the necessary revenues which the Commons had persisted in withholding. The liberties of England would then have been lost, if a stronger principle than the love of liberty had not been opposed to him.

During this contention the Puritans had greatly increased in numbers and in audacity. Under Abbot's fatal protection they had got possession of too many churches both in town and country ; and the preachers who had thus entered the Church

with the desire, if not the design, of betraying it, were powerfully aided by lecturers in London and most other populous places. Because of the superstitions connected with the mass, the Puritans, falling into an opposite extreme, disparaged social prayer and thanksgiving, and attached as much importance to sermons as the Romanists to what they deemed the sacrifice of the altar. They maintained the extravagant and pernicious opinion, that the Scripture had no efficacy unless it were expounded in sermons, the word no vital operation unless it were preached from the pulpit; that prayers and sacraments without sermons, were not merely unprofitable, but tended to farther* condemnation, and that sermons themselves must be heard, not† read, for it was through the ear only that they could reach the heart. There was some reason for this assertion; the heavy hand of power might have reached the preacher if he printed his inflammatory harangues, and the empty oratory by which itching ears were tickled, would not have imposed upon men of honest minds and sober understanding, when they examined it at leisure by the test of common sense. The nature of public worship was better understood by the founders of the English Church. They knew that public instruction is only a part of it, and not the most important; and if in the morning there was a sermon or homily for the edification of the elder, they thought that in the afternoon the minister was not less usefully employed in catechising and examining the younger members of his flock.

In maintaining that preaching was the first duty of the clergy, the Puritans followed the Lollards; it was one of those errors which Bishop Pecock withstood. But it accorded with the temper of the people. Crowds were attracted not less surely by a sermon than by a pageant; and they listened to long discourses with a delight which would be unaccountable, did we not know that the pulpit possessed over the public mind, in those days, the influence which in these is exercised by the press. When Elizabeth wished to prepare the nation for any of her measures, she began by what she called‡ “tuning the pulpits.” The enemies of the monarchy and of the Church had learnt this policy too; and they perverted also to the furtherance of their purpose, what in its origin had been an excellent design. The parochial clergy had been well provided for by the institution of tithes, till the monastic orders, in their cupidity, deranged the system. They obtained advowsons among other grants from their devo-

* Hooker, b. v. 232.

† Ibid. b. v. p. 221, ed. 1632.

‡ Heylyn's Life of Laud, p. 153.

tees; the convent to which a living was annexed, receiving the tithes and supplying the parish with one of its own members, or with a stipendiary curate. Less hospitality could be kept up, and the influence of the resident ministers must thus have been diminished; but the property, though diverted from its original destination, remained in ecclesiastical hands, the transfer being from the secular clergy to the regular. At the Reformation it was lost to the Church; the impropriated tithes passed then with the other property of the religious houses into the hands of the spoilers. They used their patronage as unworthily as they had obtained it, bestowing their cures upon such persons as would undertake to serve them at the cheapest rate, who were of course the needy, the ignorant, or the profligate. The scandal thus brought upon the Church became a frequent topic of indignant censure in the writings and discourses of those who had the interests of religion at heart; and at length an association was formed for the purpose of purchasing lay impropriations, and re-annexing them to the impoverished livings from which they had been severed. Large sums were raised by voluntary contributions, and intrusted to a self-constituted corporation of feoffees, consisting of four clergymen, four lawyers, and four citizens, with a treasurer, who, if the others should be balanced in opinion, possessed the casting voice. The persons who bestirred themselves with most activity in this project, and obtained the management of it, were leading men among the Puritans; and it soon appeared what insidious intentions were covered under this specious pretext. Instead of restoring to the parish church the impropriations which they purchased, they employed the revenue in establishing lecturers (removable at their pleasure, and therefore dependent on them), in market towns, and especially in such as sent members to Parliament; in supporting schoolmasters to train up youth in Puritanical opinions, granting exhibitions at the University to the pupils thus trained, pensioning ministers who had been silenced for nonconformity, and assisting the families of such as had thus suffered in their cause. The course* which the feoffees pursued, made their intention evident; they were manifestly the main instruments for the Puritan faction to undo the Church: they were, therefore, called into the Court of Exchequer, the feoffment condemned as being illegal, and the impropriations which they had acquired were confiscated to the King's use.

The ostensible purport of this feoffment was so unexception-

* Laud's Hist. of his Troubles, p. 372, 373.

ably good, that the multitude, who were incapable of understanding the dangerous end to which it was directed, joined with the enemies of the Church in lamenting its suppression; and this measure increased the animosity with which Laud, the new Primate, was assailed. His love of learning, his liberal temper, his munificence, and his magnanimity, would have made him an honour and a blessing to the Church in its happiest ages; his ardent, incautious, sincere, uncompromising spirit, were ill adapted to that in which his lot had fallen. But the circumstances which brought on, together with his destruction, the overthrow of the Church and State, the murder of the King, and the long miseries of the nation, were many and widely various; some of remote and foreign origin, others recent and of home growth.

The establishment of the Dutch republic was one of those causes. Nothing in the history of the modern world had as yet so strongly and so worthily excited the sympathy of upright and intelligent minds, as the struggle in which the Netherlanders engaged for their civil and religious liberties. Never was good cause more virtuously and gloriously defended. But by those wars the way was prepared for that preponderance of the French power which has produced such evils to Europe, and in all human likelihood will yet produce more: and as the doctrinal disputes which in their consequences subverted the Church of England, were principally derived from the Synod of Dort, so from the Dutch wars were the seeds of English republicanism imported. English and Scotchmen were trained in those wars as soldiers of fortune, ready to embark in any cause. A great proportion of the trading part of the community, especially of the Londoners, seeing the commercial prosperity of the Dutch, imputed it to the form of their * commonwealth; for they were too ignorant to know what had been the previous condition of the Low Countries. And at the same time many of the higher classes had imbibed from their classical studies † prejudices in favour of a popular government, which are as congenial to the generous temper of inexperienced youth, as they are inconsistent with sound knowledge and mature judgment. Thus, while some men of surpassing talents were so infatuated with political theories, that for the prospect of realising them they were willing to incur the danger and the guilt of exciting a civil war, others were ready to co-operate with them for the hope of destroying ‡ Episcopacy, and establishing, with the discipline of Geneva, the

* Hobbes, p. 489, ed. 1750.

† Ibid. p. 489.

‡ Clarendon's Life, i. p. 81.

irreversible decrees of Calvinism by rigorous laws. And they who for these secret purposes, which they dared not as yet avow, systematically attacked the Government, were strengthened by the aid of many wise and moderate men (the best of the nation), who from the purest motives opposed the injurious measures of the Crown, till the same sense of duty which had induced them to resist it in its strength, made them exert themselves and sacrifice themselves for its support in its hour of weakness and distress. To these were added those who, being neither under the restraint of good principles nor the delusion of erroneous ones, cared not whether they aggrandised themselves by compelling the Crown to grant them honours and emoluments, or by overthrowing it and sharing in its spoils; the crafty, who looked for opportunities of promoting their own interest in the troubles which they fomented; and they who from timidity and wariness adhered always to the stronger side, though with no worse motive than that of preserving themselves and their families from ruin.

While these persons swam with the stream, they whose determination it was to shake the throne, and to subvert the altar, practised without scruple any means whereby their designs might be promoted. One of their most effectual arts was to possess the people with an opinion that the King in his heart favoured Popery, and that Laud was seeking to re-establish it. In both cases the imputation was nefariously false. Charles had inherited his father's wise and tolerant feelings toward the Romanists. Had it been possible to bring about a reunion with the Romish Church, preserving the principles and the independence of the Church of England, he would gladly have co-operated in a measure so devoutly to be wished. But knowing that the difficulties were insuperable, he contented himself with endeavouring to lessen the evils of the separation as far as his power might extend; and in the intercourse of courtesy which he maintained with Rome, he made known his resolution that no Papist under his reign should suffer death on the score of his religion. Laud heartily accorded with the King in these feelings and intentions; but the Papal Court was not tolerant enough to understand their conduct; that which proceeded from humanity and wisdom and Christian charity, was supposed at Rome to indicate an unsettled faith; hopes were entertained there of the King's conversion, and a cardinal's hat was actually offered to the Primate. The calumny, therefore, that they were in collusion with the Papal Court, was easily raised by bigoted or designing men, and

greedily received by the multitude who were then in the delirium of fanatical zeal : and to this day it is audaciously repeated, in defiance of the most conclusive evidence of history and the most notorious and indubitable facts. But the zealots of faction are neither capable of shame nor of remorse. For never were two men more conscientiously attached to the Church of England, more devoutly convinced of its doctrines, more deeply sensible of its inestimable value to the nation, than this King and this Primate, who, in their lives, were the most steadfast of its defenders, and the most munificent of its benefactors, and in their deaths the most illustrious of its martyrs.

The charitable temper of Laud toward the Papists, and the humanity with which he sometimes interfered in behalf of the imprisoned priests, might alone have rendered him unpopular among the Puritans. But his zeal for the Church over which he presided entitled him to their hatred ; and the clear knowledge, which, like his predecessors Parker and Whitgift, he possessed of their ends and aim, drew upon him the rancorous and deadly hatred of the factions who were now leagued against the state. That knowledge he expressed in a sermon preached at the opening of Charles's first Parliament. "They,"* said he, "whoever they be that would overturn *sedes ecclesiæ*, the seats of ecclesiastical judgment, will not spare if ever they get power to have a pluck at the throne of David ; and there is not a man that is for parity, all fellows in this Church, but he is against monarchy in the State. And certainly either he is but half-headed to his own principles, or he can be but half-hearted to the House of David."

His first act upon being made Dean of the Chapel, displayed the sense of duty with which he entered upon his functions. It had been the ill custom of the court, during the preceding reign, that whenever the King came into his closet, which looked into the Chapel, the prayers were immediately broken off, and the anthem begun, that the preacher might without delay ascend the pulpit. Justly disliking this, Laud requested † his Majesty that he would be present every Sunday at the liturgy as well as the sermon, and that at whatsoever part of the service he might enter, the minister should regularly proceed with it ; Charles not only assented to his request, but thanked him for the admonition. Had he met with the same good intentions and sense of duty in the whole of his clergy, which he found in his Sovereign, the task of restoring discipline would have been easy.

* Nalson, vol. ii. p. 5.

† Heylyn's Life of Laud, p. 158.

But Abbot had been so wilfully remiss, that every pragmatical or discontented clergyman did with the service as he thought fit; till inconformity* had become well nigh general. It was difficult to curb the licence which had thus begun to plead privilege in its defence; still more so to correct the sour spirit of Calvinism with which the clergy were now leavened. The zeal with which he attempted this necessary reform, was not always accompanied with discretion; and such is ever the malignity of faction, that while his virtues, his learning, and his splendid liberality, were overlooked, his errors and weaknesses were exaggerated, his intentions traduced, and even his best actions represented as crimes.

His reverence for antiquity, his love for the pomps and ceremonies of worship, and the impression which he allowed to be made upon his mind by dreams and imagined omens, exposed him to a charge of superstition, from those who were so superstitious themselves, that they† accused him of having brought on tempests and shipwrecks, by omitting a prayer for fine weather in the last form of service for a fast day, that day having been appointed at a time when the harvest had just happily been won! At the same time he was loudly arraigned for profaneness, because the King, as his father had done before him, published a declaration authorising lawful sports on Sundays, in opposition to the Sabbatarian notions with which the Puritans were possessed. These factious people, although impatient of any observances which the institutions of their country enjoined, were willing to have imposed upon themselves and others obligations far more burthensome: they would have taken Moses for their lawgiver, so ill did they understand the spirit of the Gospel; and they adopted the rabbinical superstitions concerning the Sabbath, overlooking or being ignorant that the Sabbath was intended to be not less a day of recreation than of rest.

The motives for this declaration were unobjectionably good; but the just liberty which in happier times, and under proper parochial discipline, would have been in all respects useful, proved injurious in the then distempered state of public feeling. It displeased the well-intentioned part of the Calvinised Clergy, and it was abused in officious triumph by those who were glad of an opportunity for insulting the professors of a sour and dismal morality. Laud's unpopularity was further increased, by his enjoining that the Communion-table should be placed in the

* Hamond I'Estrange, p. 137.

† Rushworth, vol. ii. part 2, app. p. 120.

chancel and decently railed in, and by his practice of bowing toward it, which his enemies considered to be a mark of Popish superstition. Offence was taken also, because the University of Oxford, to which he was a most munificent and judicious benefactor, addressed him by the titles of his Holiness, and most holy Father; and because he publicly* declared that in the disposal of ecclesiastical preferments, he would, when their merits were equal, prefer the single to the married men. But nothing exasperated the feeling of the people against him, so much as the inhuman sentences passed in the Star Chamber upon Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton, as libellers. They were condemned to a fine of five thousand pounds each, to lose their ears in the pillory, and to be imprisoned during the King's pleasure: and Prynne's being a second offence, the stumps of his ears were cut off, and he was branded in both cheeks. The sentence was as bravely endured as it was cruelly performed, and the sufferers, already popular for their cause, became more so for their fortitude. The whole odium fell upon Laud, partly because the libels, which were of the foulest and most atrocious kind, were particularly directed against him; but still more because, by a series of systematic libelling and slander, he had been made the peculiar object of vulgar hatred. No regard was paid to the fact, that every member of the court concurred in the sentence, including some who were deeply implicated in the intrigues against the State; and as little was it considered that the principles which these criminals disseminated tended directly to excite rebellion, and that they aimed at nothing short of the destruction of those who opposed them. Prynne himself lived to be sensible of this, and to acknowledge in his old age† that "if the King had cut off his head, when he only cropt his ears, he had done no more than justice, and had done God and the nation good service."

But that which drew most obloquy and heaviest persecution upon the heads of the Clergy, was the promulgating a body of Canons wherein an oath was enjoined for preventing all innovations in doctrine and government. By this oath the clergy declared their approbation of the Church of England both in doctrine and discipline, as containing all things necessary to salvation; and pledged themselves neither directly nor indirectly to bring in any popish tenets, nor subject it to the usurpations and superstitions of the See of Rome, nor consent ever to alter its Government by Archbishops, Bishops, Deans, and Archdeacons, &c., as it was at that time established. All clergymen

* Heylyn's Life of Laud, p. 212.

† Nalson, i. p. 798.

were required to take this oath, on pain of suspension and deprivation. No one who had conscientiously entered the ministry could object to its purport, and it was so worded that by every untainted mind it might have been taken as honestly as it was meant. Nevertheless an outcry was easily raised against it in those evil times, as if the common form of speech which had been used to save a needless enumeration of offices, covered some insidious meaning, and therefore it was branded with the name of the *etcetera* oath. Any clamour of this kind, which bids defiance to reason, is always favourable to the views of faction.

More formidable objections were brought against the first Canon, wherein it was declared that monarchy is of Divine right; that it is treasonable to set up any independent coercive power, either papal or popular; and that for subjects to bear arms against their King upon any pretence whatsoever, is to resist the power ordained of God. This was touching the plague-sore of the age; for it was a doctrine which some of the clergy in their zeal against the seditious spirit of the Puritans, and others more inexcusably for the purpose of recommending themselves to court-favour, had carried to an extreme hardly less dangerous than that to which it was opposed. Dr Manwaring in particular had preached, that the authority of Parliament was not necessary for imposing taxes, but that the King might levy them by his own royal will and pleasure, which in such cases bound the subject's conscience on pain of damnation. For this he was condemned by the House of Lords to be imprisoned during pleasure, fined one thousand pounds, suspended for three years, disabled for ever from preaching at Court, and declared incapable of holding any ecclesiastical or secular preferment. He made a humble submission on his knees before both houses, acknowledging that he had preached rashly, scandalously, and unadvisedly, and entreating pardon of God, the King, the Parliament, and the Commonweal, for the dangerous errors which he had committed. But the opinions which he thus renounced were too congenial to those in which the King had been trained; and Charles, not satisfied with remitting the fine, (which would have been a commendable act of compassion), most unfitly heaped preferment upon him, in disregard of his sentence, and finally promoted him to the bishopric of St David's. It was too plain that he had been rewarded not for his submission, but for the opinions which had exposed him to punishment. Even moderate men, therefore, interpreting this Canon by the known feelings of the Court, deemed it highly reprehensible, and imputing to it a

wider meaning than the words themselves conveyed, considered it as asserting an absolute power in the Crown.

Yet it is apparent that in framing these Canons Laud proceeded not only (as he always did) with the best intentions for the Church, but in a conciliatory temper. Ceremonies, to which he was devoutly attached, were merely recommended, not enjoined, and they who should observe or omit them were exhorted to judge charitably of each other; stricter measures against popish recusants were prescribed, than he as an individual could have approved, and regulations were made for preventing the abuses of ecclesiastical power. But whatever Laud did was maliciously interpreted. The Canons too were formed in a Convocation, which, meeting as usual with Parliament, should have broken up, according to custom, when Parliament was dissolved: but as the dissolution took place before the clergy had completed these laws, or voted their subsidy, the Assembly was continued during the King's pleasure, in order to complete its business by virtue of a Commission under the Great Seal. There was a precedent for this in Elizabeth's reign, and the Judges had given their opinion in its favour. The legality therefore of its continuance would not have been denied, if the enemies of the Church had regarded either the reason or the justice of the case; but they were as ready to cry out for the rigorous observance of the law, when it suited their purposes, as to trample upon it when it opposed them.

Laud had long seen the cloud gathering over the Church of England. He knew also his own danger from those who were possessed with the spirit of sectarian rancour, and from an ignorant populace rendered ferocious by all the arts of faction. He had privately and publicly been threatened in papers, which denounced him as a wretch, whom neither God nor the world could suffer to live; and his house had been attacked by a mob at midnight. But he being as courageous as he was innocent, confided in his integrity, and in that plain evidence of good intentions which was borne by all his actions. In a diary which he meant that no eye but his own should see, he had written this prayer: "May God so love and bless my soul, as I declare and endeavour that all the never-to-be-enough deplored distractions of the Church may be composed happily to the glory of his name." His plans for the advantage of the church, and for the promotion of sound learning, were of the most munificent kind; and he had employed his fortune as well as his influence in carrying them into effect. From his own private means he had

endowed a chapel in his native town of Reading, enlarged St John's College at Oxford, where he had been bred, established an Arabic lecture in that University, and presented to the Bodleian Library as many Greek and Oriental manuscripts as he could procure from the East. He annexed commendams to five of the smaller bishoprics, and intended in the same manner to increase the revenues of all that needed augmentation. He raised funds for repairing St Paul's, which had been materially injured by fire, and by continuing those funds after the repairs should be completed, it was his intention to pursue the plan of buying in impropriations, and re-annexing them to the churches from which they had been severed. At his request the King had restored to the Church of Ireland all the impropriations yet remaining in the Crown: and had the Government continued undisturbed, it cannot be doubted that Charles would heartily have entered into his plans for improving the condition of the inferior clergy; one means, and not the least effectual, of removing the reproach which unworthy ministers brought upon the Establishment. It was well said by Sir Benjamin Rudyard, one of the most upright and able men of that age, that scandalous livings cannot but have scandalous ministers: that poverty must needs bring contempt upon the clergy among those who measure men by the acre and weigh them by the pound, which indeed is the greatest part of men; that to plant good ministers in good livings, was the strongest and purest means to establish true religion; that the example of Germany ought to be a warning to us, where the reformed ministers, though grave and learned men, were neglected and despised by reason of their poverty; and that it is comely and decent that the outward splendour of the Church should hold a proportion, and participate with the prosperity of the temporal estate.

By steadily enforcing discipline, Laud corrected many of the disorders at which his predecessor had connived. The churches were placed in decent repair, the service was regularly performed, the Lord's Supper reverently administered. They who would not follow the rubric were silenced; and by refusing to ordain any person, except to a cure of souls, the number of Calvinistic Lecturers was diminished, and of those who, being retained as chaplains in the families of private gentlemen, disgraced the Church by conforming to the humours and fancies of their patrons, by their incapacity, or by the irregularity of their lives. At the same time, through his munificent encouragement of learning, and his judicious patronage, means were taken for

supplying the Establishment with men every way qualified for their holy office. The most zealous of the nonconformists, alike impatient of submission or of silence, withdrew from the kingdom: some to Holland, others to New England, whither the most strenuous of their parliamentary adherents, believing that the triumph of the Establishment was complete, would have followed them, if the vessel in which they were actually embarked had not been embargoed. From that act events of greater importance to society resulted, than was depending upon the ship which carried Cæsar and his fortunes; for Pym, Hambden, and Cromwell were on board. Had these men been allowed to emigrate, the kingdom might have remained in peace, but it would have been under an absolute government, the tendency of which is inevitably to corrupt the rulers and degrade the nation.

Hitherto the course of civil and of ecclesiastical affairs during this reign had in no degree depended upon each other. The course which the hierarchy pursued would have been the same, had the Government been as popular as in the days of Elizabeth; it was in fact strictly conformable to the scheme of Church policy, which that Queen and her great minister Burleigh had approved. The obnoxious policy of the Court proceeded not from any spirit of bigotry or persecution (no former government had been so tolerant); but from the difficulties wherein it was involved, first by the injustice of the Commons in withholding supplies for a war which they themselves had excited, and then by arbitrary measures adopted less from inclination than in self-defence, but carried too far, and persisted in too long. Men and parties, the most opposite in character and views, were combined therefore against a system, which, in whatever manner it had arisen, was plainly inconsistent with the liberties of the nation; and thus, wise and honourable and loyal men, the true friends of the constitution, were engaged for a time, as if in a common cause, with those who aimed at establishing a sort of Venetian oligarchy, others whom nothing but a wild democracy would content, and others wilder still, who were for levelling thrones, dignities, and estates, to prepare the way for the kingdom of Christ. Their madness was not yet avowed; it was kept from breaking forth by the salutary restraint of ecclesiastical discipline. The purposes of the aristocratic republicans were more matured as well as more feasible, and the opportunity which they sought was afforded by an explosion in Scotland.

The Reformation in that kingdom had been carried on with

greater violence than in England, the Government having been opposed to it at first, and afterwards too weak to direct its course. The turbulent nobles shared among themselves the spoils of the Church; and the fierce, uncompromising, high-minded, hard-hearted zealots by whom the storm was raised, encouraged the populace to demolish the abbeys and cathedrals. They had not, however, been allowed to construct the Church Government altogether upon the Genevan model, for Episcopacy was still retained in it; and James, when his authority was established, took measures for restoring to the bishops the temporalities of which they had been despoiled, for bettering the condition of the parochial clergy, and for assimilating the service to that of the English Church; and he enjoined his successor to go on with what he should leave incomplete. These measures alarmed the great landholders, who dreaded lest the estates of which they had tortuously possessed themselves should be resumed; and provoked the Puritanical clergy, to whom every vestige of Catholicism was an abomination, but who had succeeded to the intolerance of the Catholic priesthood, to their assumed infallibility, and were now claiming to inherit their spiritual despotism. These persons were joined by the discontented and the desperate, all who by means of public confusion hoped to advance or to retrieve their fortunes. On the part of the English Government there was a culpable disregard of forms and usages, as if it relied too proudly upon its meritorious intentions; on the part of its Scotch ministers there was imprudence in some, treachery in others. A popular commotion was easily raised, and then craftily directed. The people bound themselves by a solemn covenant to resist all innovations in religion, to the uttermost of that power which God had put into their hands; and not to be diverted from their course by allurements or terror, word or writ, but whatever aspersion of rebellion might be cast upon them, labour to restore the purity and liberty of the Gospel. A saving clause was inserted for the defence of the King's Majesty, his person and authority, and the peace of the kingdom; and a solemn engagement was made to keep themselves and those under them, both in public and private, within the bounds of Christian liberty, and to be good examples to others of all godliness, soberness, and righteousness, and of every duty owing to God and man.

The people who through their fear of Popery were excited to this rebellious combination, were too ignorant to perceive how closely their leaders were imitating some of those very things.

which had rendered the Papal cause deservedly odious: they did not know that the men, who, by means of the pulpit and the press, were stirring them to rebellion, used those very maxims and arguments of the Jesuits,* which had rendered the penal laws against the Catholics necessary; and that the covenant itself was an exact counter-part of that league, which had brought upon France an age of civil war and universal suffering. The storm was soon raised.† The Scotch were in treasonable communication with the Dutch, and with Richelieu and the French Government; the heads of the popular party in England, with the Scotch.‡ The resources of the Government, which, though unduly raised, had been providently as well as worthily employed, were soon exhausted in the contest; for Charles was betrayed by his servants, by his generals, and still more fatally, by his own indecision. Necessity compelled him to call a Parliament: it was hastily dissolved through the rash or malicious conduct of an unfaithful minister; the indiscreet dissolution increased the discontent of the nation; another Parliament was summoned, in which the enemies of Government by their activity and talents, more than by their numbers, immediately took the lead; and they commenced those systematic attacks upon the Crown, which were intended to make the Sovereign either their victim or their instrument.

Prynne and his fellow-sufferers were now released by order of Parliament; many who thought them well deserving of punishment, pitied them nevertheless for the cruelty with which they had been punished: others procured their enlargement for the purpose of letting them loose against the State, and prepared for them a triumphant entry into London. The attack upon the Church was begun by passing a resolution, that the clergy had no power to make any canons without common consent in Parliament, though no other method had ever been pursued; and the bishops were impeached for high treason upon this ground. They were reviled for the part which they bore in State affairs; and yet no persons took a greater share in national concerns, than the very preachers by whom they were reproached with the most vehemence on that score. None were so active in political intrigue as the seditious clergy. If petitions tending

* Nalson, i. p. 3. Dodd, ii. p. 405. "Puritanism, indeed," says South, "is only reformed Jesuitism, as Jesuitism is nothing else but Popish Puritanism: and I could draw out such an exact parallel between them, both as to principles and practices, that it would quickly appear

they are as truly brothers as ever were Romulus and Remus; and that they sucked their principles from the same wolf." Vol. iii. p. 535.

† Aitzema, ii. pp. 521, 674.

‡ Laud's History of his Troubles, pp. 83, 85. Whitelock, pp. 30, 32.

to subvert the civil and ecclesiastical constitution were to be got up ; if the subscriptions of honest men were to be obtained to a moderate paper and transferred to an inflammatory one, which they conscientiously disapproved ; if mobs were to be collected for intimidating the House of Lords ; if a cry was to be raised for the blood of an individual whom the faction feared or hated ; if the trumpet of rebellion was to be blown, the Puritanical clergy performed these services for their friends in Parliament. And it is worthy of notice that the most active in this work of wickedness, were not the men who had been suspended for non-conformity, but those of Abbot's school, who, complying with the rubric as long as they stood in fear of Laud's vigilant superintendence, had hitherto enjoyed the benefices of the Church, while they waited for an opportunity to pervert its doctrine, overthrow its discipline, and proscribe its forms.

The Parliament began by marking Strafford for destruction, because they feared him. From hatred, and the viler motive of gratifying a deluded multitude, they accused Laud also of high treason. He had long known that the rabble thirsted for his blood, but this he said "was strange news to his innocency, having to the uttermost of his understanding served the King with all duty and faithfulness, and without any known or wilful disservice to the State there-while." So that when the charge was made, he declared with honest indignation his persuasion that not a man in the house believed it in his heart. The Scotch also were instigated to present a memorial against these illustrious victims, as odious incendiaries, who had caused all the present calamities. Laud was committed to the Tower, and left there in the hope that age and imprisonment would free his persecutors from further trouble. The impeachment against Strafford was vigorously pursued : it was intended to deprive the bishops of the right of voting in his cause, upon the plea that it was a case of blood, in which the canons forbade them to take a part. They were persuaded voluntarily to withdraw, in the hope of obtaining favour, for the censure concerning the canons was hanging over them ; and thus for the vain prospect of conciliating their declared enemies (a purpose which never has been, and never will be obtained, by any concessions arising from fear or weakness), they disheartened as well as displeased their friends, betrayed their own rights, and deserted an innocent and persecuted man in his hour of need. They soon perceived what was the reward of cowardice.

A petition had already been presented at the Commons by

the notorious Alderman Pennington, for the total extirpation of Episcopacy. As yet there were only three leading men in that House who were known to be for destroying root and branch, but these were men of great influence and ability, and two of them, Sir Henry Vane and Hambden, had the wisdom of the serpent in perfection. A bill was now brought in to take away the bishops' votes in Parliament, and to leave them out in all commissions that had any relation to temporal affairs. Lord Falkland was persuaded to concur in this by the assurance of Hambden, that if that bill passed, nothing more would be attempted to the prejudice of the Church. It passed the Commons, but was not even committed by the Lords. Upon this a bill for the utter eradication of bishops, deans, and chapters, and all offices dependent on them, was prepared by St John; and Sir Arthur Haslerig, in conjunction with Vane and Cromwell, who now began to appear among the Rooters, as they were called, prevailed upon Sir Edward Dering to bring it forward.

Sir Edward Dering was a man of fine person and upright intentions, who possessed the most dangerous of all endowments, when unaccompanied with sound judgment, . . . a ready eloquence. He had inherited* Puritanical opinions, and at a season when (in his own words) "many were more wise and some more wilful than in former time," fancied that he had devised a scheme by which the advantages of the Presbyterian platform might be combined with those of an Episcopal church. In this he had been influenced not more by his hereditary prejudices than by a feeling of hostility towards Laud, whom nevertheless he respected for his integrity, and for his erudition. It was his fortune to begin the attack upon him by preferring a complaint of some local grievances, which, as member for Kent, he had been instructed to bring forward. The string which had thus been struck, was (said he) "of so right a tune to them that are stung with a tarantula, that I was instantly voiced more as they would have me than I was." He found himself "with as many new friends as the Primate had old enemies;" but this which would have alarmed a wise man, inflated a vain one, and made him an apt instrument for the subtle revolutionists by

* It was one of the same name and family who, "preaching before Queen Elizabeth, told her, that when in persecution under her sister Queen Mary, her motto was *tanquam ovis*, as a sheep, but now it might be *tanquam indomita juvenca*, as an untamed heifer. But

surely, says Fuller, the Queen retained much of her ancient motto as a sheep, in that she patiently endured so public (and conceived causeless) reproof, in inflicting no punishment upon him, save commanding him to forbear further preaching at the Court." B. ix. p. 109.

whom, few as they still were in number, the House of Commons was in fact directed. Their present end was answered by this manifestation of their views, which would alike encourage their own faction and dismay their opponents; and they were, therefore, contented with bringing in the bill, and laying it by after the first reading, for a more convenient season.

Their next measure was to draw up a protestation (in imitation of the covenant) for the members of both houses, whereby they bound themselves to maintain "the true reformed Protestant religion expressed in the doctrine of the Church of England, against all Popery and Popish innovation within this realm." And after the lords had taken it, they then, and not till then, explained that these words were "not to be extended to the maintaining of any form of worship, discipline, or government, nor of any rites or ceremonies of the said Church." The High Commission Court was now put down, a tribunal which during half a century had given offence to none but the enemies of the Church; its authority had afterwards been equally extended and abused; it had taken upon itself, with questionable legality, to impose fines, and that authority having been used more frequently and more heavily after the fines had been granted by the King in aid of the reparation of St Paul's (a national and necessary work upon which Laud was earnestly intent), it had become peculiarly obnoxious. But the aim of the ruling faction was destruction, not reformation; and by the same act which suppressed an arbitrary tribunal, all wholesome ecclesiastical discipline was in fact destroyed.

The House of Lords meantime appointed a committee for religion, consisting of twenty peers and ten bishops, who were to inquire into doctrines as well as ceremonies, and a sub-committee, consisting wholly of clergy, to prepare matters for their cognisance. The members of the latter were chiefly doctrinal Puritans, a few were rightly affected in all things to the Church whereof they were members, a larger proportion were zealots in the popular cause. Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, formerly Lord Keeper, and soon afterwards Archbishop of York, was president of both committees; he was a person of great erudition and abilities; but animosity against Laud had tempted him first to actions ill-according with his station and his duty; and resentment for a persecution, which if not originally unjust, had been inordinately severe, betrayed him now into a more inexcusable course of conduct. The Primate in his imprisonment apprehended from this committee great dishonour to the Church, and

illimitable evil. How far, indeed, Williams might have gone with the Calvinists, and what concessions he might have made to the Root and Branch men, whom no compromise could have conciliated, cannot be known. Their brethren in the Commons were too eager for triumph, and too sure of it, to wait the slow proceedings of these committees, and they brought in a bill for the suppression of deans and chapters. The arguments for this spoliation were such as base and malicious minds address to the ignorant and the vulgar, when they seek to carry into effect, by means of popular clamour, a purpose of foul injustice. They were refuted with great ability by Dr Hacket, who was admitted to speak before the House in behalf of the dignified clergy; by Sir Benjamin Rudyard, one of the most eloquent men in that best age of English eloquence; and by Sir Edward Dering himself, who, when he had discovered too late at what the reformers were aiming, came forward manfully, and proved the uprightness of his own intentions, by atoning, as far as was in his power, for the errors into which he had been beguiled.

The party were not disheartened, though their measures were sometimes defeated in the Commons and sometimes rejected by the Lords. As the slightest introduction of morbid matter into the human system suffices to induce disease or death, so when destructive opinions are once avowed in a legislative body, they continue to work till the crisis is produced; the very strength of evil consisting in its restlessness and activity. The puritanical members were always at their post, always alert, and on the watch for every occasion; their opponents too often absented themselves from the House, wearied by pertinacity, or disgusted by violence; many fatally persuaded themselves that their individual presence would contribute little to the preservation of government; but advantage was taken of their absence, to carry the most mischievous questions; thus a handful of determined Rooters, first by address and vigilance, then by intimidation and the help of the mob, succeeded in making Parliament speak their language; and many of the best and noblest members sacrificed at last their fortunes and their lives, defending unsuccessfully in the field that cause which, if they had never relaxed from their duty in the senate, would never have been brought to the decision of arms.

The Root and Branch men, feeling now that audacity insured success, and that every success increased their numbers and their strength, moved that there might be liberty to disuse the Common Prayer, by reason that in many things it gave offence

to tender consciences. The majority at once rejected the motion, well knowing that "if that which offends the weak brother is to be avoided, much more that which offends the strong;" and they voted that it should be duly observed. But on the very next day, in violation of all parliamentary rules, the Puritans, finding themselves masters of a thin House, suspended the yesterday's order, and passed a resolution that the communion table should be removed from its appointed place, the rails which enclosed it pulled down, and the chancel levelled, and that no man should presume to bow at the name of Jesus. Sir Edward Dering, who now on all occasions stood forward in defence of the Church, opposed this last infamous decree with great feeling. "Hear me," said he, "with patience, and refute me with reason. Your command is that all corporal bowing at the name of Jesus be henceforth forborne.

"I have often wished that we might decline these dogmatical resolutions in divinity. I say it again and again, that we are not *idonei et competentes judices* in doctrinal determination. The theme we are now upon is a sad point. I pray you consider severely on it.

"*You know there is no other Name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* You know that this is a Name above every name. *Oleum effusum nomen ejus*; it is the carol of his own spouse. This Name is by a Father styled *mel in ore, melos in aure, jubilum in corde*. This it is the sweetest and the fullest of comfort of all the Names and attributes of God, *God my Saviour*. If Christ were not our Jesus, Heaven were then our envy, which is now our blessed hope.

"And must I, Sir, hereafter do no exterior reverence, . . . none at all, . . . to God my Saviour, at the mention of his saving name Jesus? Why, Sir, not to do it, . . . to omit it, and to leave it undone, it is questionable, it is controvertible; it is at least a moot point in divinity. But to deny it, . . . to forbid it to be done! . . . take heed, Sir! God will never own you if you forbid his honour. Truly, Sir, it horrors me to think of this. For my part, I do humbly ask pardon of this House, and thereupon I take leave and liberty to give you my resolute resolution. I may, . . . I must, . . . I will do bodily reverence unto my Saviour; and that upon occasion taken at the mention of his saving name Jesus. And if I should do it also as oft as the name of God, or Jehovah, or Christ, is named in our solemn devotions, I do not know any argument in divinity to control me.

"Mr Speaker, I shall never be frightened from this, with that

fond shallow argument, 'Oh you make an Idol of a name!' I beseech you, Sir, paint me a voice; make a sound visible if you can. When you have taught mine ears to see, and mine eyes to hear, I may then perhaps understand this subtle argument. In the mean time reduce this dainty species of new idolatry under its proper head, the second commandment, if you can: and if I find it there, I will fly from it *ultra Sauromatas*, and any whither with you.

"Was it ever heard before, that any men of any religion, in any age, did ever cut short or abridge any worship, upon any occasion, to their God? Take heed, Sir, and let us all take heed whither we are going! If Christ be JESUS, if JESUS be God, all reverence, exterior as well as interior, is too little for him. I hope we are not going up the back stairs to Socinianism!

"In a word, certainly, Sir, I shall never obey your order, so long as I have a head to lift up to Heaven, so long as I have an eye to lift up to Heaven. For these are corporal bowings, and my Saviour shall have them at his name JESUS!"

It is not by eloquence and reason that men can be deterred from factious purposes. The resolutions were passed and carried to the Lords, who receiving them with becoming indignation, both at the irregularity, and the intent of such proceedings, refused to join with the Commons, and directed an order made in full Parliament, seven months before, to be printed, enjoining that the divine service should be duly performed according to law, and that all who disturbed that wholesome order should be severely punished. But the Commons, now wholly under guidance of the Root and Branch men, commanded the people of England to submit to their direction and disregard the order of the Lords, trampling thus upon the privileges of the Peerage, as they had already done upon those of the clergy and of the throne. For the faction had now advanced so far, that they treated with contemptuous disregard the forms of law and the principles of the Government, except when it was convenient to wrest them to their own purposes, and then indeed they were insisted on with the utmost rigour of tyranny. In their spirit of contempt for ancient usages, when the house adjourned they appointed a committee to transact business during the recess, which was, in fact, little short of committing the Government into their hands; and the first act of the committee thus unconstitutionally appointed, was to exercise their usurped jurisdiction in ecclesiastical affairs, sending forth their orders to be read in all churches, and authorising the parishioners of any parish to choose a

lecturer, and maintain him at their own charge. Immediately the London pulpits, and those in the larger provincial towns, where the Puritans had obtained a footing, were manned with preachers, ministers, not of peace and Christian morality, but of hatred, violence, and rebellion, who, as if they studied Scripture merely to distort it, applied its denunciations directly against the bishops and the order of the Church; and with scarce the semblance of a cover, against the King and the frame of the State also. They did this with the confidence of entire impunity, having now obtained that liberty of speech and of the press, which they desired, . . . that is, unrestrained license for their own party, and the power of punishing any who should speak or write against them, with a vigour beyond the law. They exercised this power in the case of Dr Pocklington, one of the King's chaplains, who had written a treatise against that superstitious observance of the Sabbath, which the Puritans were endeavouring to enforce, and another, concerning the antiquity of altars in Christian churches; questions which he had discussed with becoming temper and moderation, as well as with competent erudition and sound judgment. And for this he was, by sentence of the House of Lords, prohibited from ever coming within the verge of the King's courts, deprived of all his livings, dignities, and preferments, and disabled from ever holding any place or dignity in Church or Commonwealth. The books were ordered to be burnt by the hangman, and the author was saved from farther punishment only by timely death.

As soon as the order respecting the altar was issued, the Puritans broke loose; painted windows were demolished, rails torn up, monumental brasses stolen, tombs defaced and destroyed. It was now plainly seen what might be expected from their full triumph, when such was their conduct upon the first success. Wherever a few zealots led the way, a rabble was easily collected to bear their part, for the love of mischief, or the hope of plunder, the sectarians suffering and encouraging these outrages for the pleasure of insulting the loyal clergy, and shewing their contempt and hatred of the Church. The authority was in their hands now, and never had the High Commission Court, in its worst days, so tyrannically abused its power. If any were found virtuous enough to oppose them, it was sufficient to complain of such persons to the House of Commons for words of dangerous consequence, and they were forthwith without a trial punished as malefactors, by arbitrary fine and imprisonment.

With the same contempt of established usages the Root and

Branch men brought in again the Bill for taking away the bishops' votes in Parliament, though it had been thrown out in the former part of the session; that objection they treated with contempt, affirming that the good of the kingdom absolutely depended upon this measure. And as the King at this time filled up the vacant sees, though he had named in every instance men of great eminence, and absolutely without reproach, it was proposed in the Commons, that the King should be desired to make no new bishops, till the controversy concerning the government of the Church should be ended. Failing in this, they demanded that the bishops should have no voice upon the question of taking away their votes, as being parties; and as the Lords were not yet sufficiently intimidated to yield to this, their next motion was, that the bishops whom they had impeached for making the Canons might be sequestered from the House, till they be brought to judgment. In all these proceedings they were supported by the legal members of the faction, who, "prostituting the dignity and learning of their profession to the cheap and vile affectation of popular applause," made use of their knowledge of the law to pervert it, and to subvert the constitution. Petitions against Episcopacy were now fabricated by a Puritanical junta in London, and poured in upon Parliament; . . . even the apprentices and the porters had their separate petitions prepared for them, and these precious addresses to the Legislature were backed by the rabble in whose name they were composed.

In opposition to these effusions of sectarian rancour and vulgar ignorance, counter petitions were presented from various parts of the country, signed by the greatest and most respectable part of the gentry, and a large majority of the freeholders, speaking the real sentiments of the better and greater part of the nation, and expressing fears which were but too fully justified by the event. They represented that bishops* had been instituted in the time of the apostles; that they were the great lights of the Church in all the first general councils; that many of them had sown the seeds of religion in their blood; that we owed to them the redemption of the Gospel from Romish corruption, many of that order having been glorious martyrs in this country for the truth, and many who were yet living its strenuous defenders against the common enemy of Rome; that their government had been long approved and established by the Common and Statute Laws of this kingdom; and that there was nothing in their

* Nalson, ii. p. 759.

doctrines dissonant from the rule of God, or the articles ratified by law. It had consisted with monarchy ever since the English monarchy was Christian; and when they were now called upon to try whether any other form of church government can or will, they could not but express a great fear of what was intended, and what was likely to ensue. They apprehended an absolute innovation of Presbyterian government; "whereby," said the petitioners, "we who are now governed by the canon and civil laws, dispensed by twenty-six ordinaries, easily responsible to Parliament for any deviation from the rule of the law, conceive we should be exposed to the mere arbitrary government of a numerous presbytery, who, together with their ruling elders, arise to near forty thousand church governors, and, with their adherents, must needs bear so great a sway in the Commonwealth, that, if future inconveniences shall be found in that government, we humbly offer to consideration, how these shall be reducible by Parliament, how consistent with monarchy, and how dangerously conducive to anarchy." They represented that the liberties of the clergy had been indulged to them by Magna Charta, granted and confirmed by many Kings, and by about thirty Parliaments in express acts: the violation of that charter, by an intrenchment upon the rights of the lay subject, was justly accounted a great grievance; and if the rights and liberties of the clergy were taken away, any one would have cause to fear that his own might be next in question.

Sir Thomas Aston, who presented one of these petitions, was reprimanded by the House, and persons were brought before its bar to be censured for printing and dispersing it: but the seditious petitioners were favourably received, and thanked for their zeal and their good intentions. With the same open contempt of decency, the Commons made it one of their complaints in that memorable remonstrance of the King, which was the manifesto of rebellion, that he had received petitions which they qualified as mutinous and malignant. The King replied with becoming resentment, "Have so many petitions even against the form and constitution of the kingdom, and the laws established, been joyfully received? . . . Hath a multitude of mean, unknown, inconsiderable, contemptible persons about the city and suburbs of London, had the liberty to petition against the government of the Church, against the Book of Common Prayer, and been thanked for it? and shall it be called mutiny in the gravest and best citizens of London, in the gentlemen and commonalty of Kent, to frame petitions upon these grounds, and desire to be

governed by the known laws of the land, not by orders or votes of either or both Houses? To stir up men to a care of maintaining the discipline of the Church, upholding and continuing the reverence and solemnity of God's service, and encouraging of learning, is *mutiny*! Let Heaven and earth, God and man, judge between us and these men!" *

The Root and Branch men, meantime, continued to exasperate popular feeling against the Bishops, by prosecuting the charge concerning the canons, which they were for making treason; though the lawyers told them they might as well call it adultery. At length they brought in a bill to punish these and the other members of the convocation † by fines, Laud's being fixed at the enormous sum of twenty thousand pounds; the other prelates from ten thousand pounds to one, and the inferior members from two hundred to one thousand. It does not appear that these fines were exacted. The enemies of the Church were aiming at its utter subversion, and they so soon succeeded in plundering the loyal clergy of their whole property, that they spared themselves the trouble of collecting a part. The Palace and the Houses of Parliament were now beset with mobs crying out, No Bishops! The names of those persons who ventured to defend them were placarded as disaffected members, and the Prelates themselves were assailed with such insults and outrages, that they absented themselves from Parliament in fear of their lives. Upon this, by advice of Williams, who had been made Archbishop of York, and having acted a base and flagitious part in aid of the faction, was rewarded with a double portion of popular abhorrence, they presented a protest to the House against all the acts, which might be done while they were deterred from doing their duties in it. Instant advantage was taken of this by the leaders of a party, who never lost any occasion that was offered them, and they committed all the Bishops who had signed it to the Tower, upon an accusation of High Treason; a charge so preposterous, that none but the most audacious and unjust of men would have preferred it. The Bill for depriving them of their seats in the House of Peers was now hurried through Parliament; and the Queen, influenced, it is believed, by her priests, who were acting under instructions from France, persuaded the King to pass it, contrary to his own judgment and conscience; an act in every respect unworthy and unwise, whereby he lost even more friends than he sacrificed.

Every concession with Charles made to faction and violence

* Walker, p. 10.

† Rushworth, vol. iii. part i. p. 235.

produced the uniform and sure effect of drawing upon him fresh demands, each more unreasonable than the last. The intent was to drive him to an appeal to arms, when they should have stripped him of all means for rendering that appeal formidable; but the loyalty of the great body of the nobility and gentlemen of England, who, with heroic fidelity, sacrificed their fortunes and lives in his service, rendered the contest longer and more doubtful than his enemies had expected. The faction, meantime, being masters of the capital, and acting as if the sole authority were legally vested in their hands, pursued their designs against the Church with all the unrelenting malice of inveterate and triumphant hatred. They had formed a committee for religion, which received like an Inquisition complaints from any person against scandalous ministers. To bow at the name of Jesus, or require communicants to receive the sacrament at the altar, was cause enough for scandal now; and anything which opposed or offended the ruling faction was comprehended under the general name of malignity; a charge as fatal to the fortunes of those against whom it was brought, as that of heresy would have been to their lives in a Popish country. They convoked also an Assembly of Divines, to frame a new model of Church Government. A few of the loyal clergy were appointed, most of whom, in obedience to the King's command, refused to appear upon an illegal summons: a large proportion of seditious preachers, who now openly professed their presbyterian principles; some honester men, though further gone in the disease of the age, who, having emigrated to Holland rather than submit to the order of the Church, returned now to take advantage of its overthrow; and lastly, certain members of both Houses, and some commissioners from Scotland.

One of the Assembly's first public acts was to petition Parliament, that a general fast might be appointed. This was afterwards enjoined monthly, and the sermons which on these occasions were delivered before both Houses were published by authority. They were thus presented to a deluded people, with all the authority of a Parliament, which was exercising a more despotic power than any King of England had ever pretended to claim; and of the Gospel itself, which was now perverted to encourage plunder, persecution, and rebellion. "Curse ye Mer-
roz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty!" "Turn your ploughshares into swords to fight the Lord's battles!" "Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword

from blood" *—was the language of these incendiary preachers. —“Vex the Midianites!† Abolish the Amalekites! Leave not a rag that belongs to Popery! Away with it, head and tail, hip‡ and thigh! Up with it from the bottom, root and branch! Down with Baal’s altars; down with Baal’s priests!” “It is better to see people lie wallowing in their blood, rather than embracing idolatry and superstition!” The effect of such language, upon a people already possessed with the darkest spirit of sectarian bigotry, was to produce a temper as ferocious as that of the crusaders, without any generous or exalted sentiment to ennoble it. There were those among them, who, according to their own avowal, “went to that execrable war, with such a controlling horror upon their spirits from these sermons, that they verily believed they should have been§ accursed from God for ever, if they had not acted their part in that dismal tragedy, and heartily done the devil’s work, being so effectually called and commanded to it in God’s name.”

The apostles of rebellion gloried in their work, and rejoiced in the condition to which they had reduced the country. “Thousands in England, which would have taken up arms to fight for the Service Book,” said one of these|| incendiaries, “have been so hammered and hewed by the continuance of God’s judgments upon us, that now they are come to this, . . . let the Parliament and Assembly do what they will with prelacy and liturgy, so the sword may be sheathed!” “Now truth shall be welcome, so they may have peace!” “Our reformation would have been very low, had not God raised the spirit of our reformers by the length of these multiplied troubles. . . . As in matters of state, the civil sword, being so indulgent, would not take off delinquents, therefore the Lord still renews the commission of the military sword, to do justice till his counsel be fulfilled; and in the affairs of the Church, many poor deluded people of England were fond of these needless ceremonies, who probably would not have been weaned from them, had not God whipped them off by the continuance of their troubles!” “This vineyard,” said another¶ belwether of rebellion, to the House of Commons, “whereof God hath made you keepers, cannot but

* Leech, quoted by Walker, p. 17.

† Thomas Coleman’s Sermon, August 30, 1643.

‡ Coleman, quoted by Walker, p. 18. Salway, ditto, p. 18. Bond, ditto, p. 18.

§ Colonel Axtell, the regicide, said this to South, and particularly mentioned Calamy as one of the preachers to whose

exhortations he alluded. South’s Sermons, vol. i. p. 32S. (Oxford edit.)

|| Thomas Hill. “England’s Season for Self-reflection,” and “Advancing Temple-work,” p. 29; preached August 13, 1644.

¶ John Arrowsmith: Ded. to his Sermon preached Jan. 25, 1643.

see that nothing is wanting on your part, for you have endeavoured to fence it by a settled militia; to gather up malignants as stones: to plant it with men of piety as choice vines; to build the tower of a powerful ministry in the midst of it; and also to make a winepress therein for the squeezing of delinquents."

As the Parliament, now that the power was in their hands, committed the very same oppressive measures, which had been the first and only solid grounds of reproach against the King, such as illegal arrests, arbitrary punishments, breach of privileges, and the imposition of taxes, without consent of the other estates, in all which their little finger was heavier than his loins; so did the puritanical clergy, who, in their horror of Popery and hatred of Episcopacy, had brought about a civil war, assume to themselves the most dangerous power of the Romish priesthood, and lay upon the consciences of their fellow-subjects a yoke tenfold heavier than that of which they had complained as intolerable. The Pope's claim to the keys of St Peter was not more dangerous to the civil authority, than their pretension to the sceptre of Christ; they maintained a Divine right in Presbytery: voted it in the Assembly of Divines, and would have carried a vote to the same effect in the Commons, if Whitelock (a man of good feelings and intentions, who adhered to a bad cause only because he wanted courage to suffer in a good one*) had not by his opposition saved the House from the absurd disgrace. The arguments which they set forth in support of their favourite doctrine, that the radical power of government belongs to the people, who have consequently a right to depose kings and to punish them, were produced in the very words of Father Persons, the most mischievous and treasonable of his books being now with little alteration pressed into the Puritan cause. They exercised a dispensing power, by virtue of which the Parliamentary soldiers, who had been made prisoners and released by the King upon their oath that they would never bear arms against him again, were induced to break that oath, and engage a second time in rebellion. Indulgence for tender consciences had been their cry, when, rather than wear the surplice, use the sign of the cross in baptism, kneel at the sacrament, and bow at the name of their Redeemer, they were labouring to excite a civil war. Yet even then, such was their own bloody intolerance, they complained of the King for not putting to death the Romish priests who were in prison, and more than once re-

* Whitelock's Memorials, p. 99, 110. ed. 1702. Walker, p. 32.

quired that the laws against them should be put in execution ; . . . though these laws had never been executed, except in cases of those treasonable practices, which had rendered their enactment necessary. One priest, John Goodman by name, for relieving whom they had reproached the King, actually petitioned Charles rather to let him suffer than increase the discontent of the nation, by continuing his mercy to him. The King washed his hands of this innocent blood by remitting the case entirely to Parliament, declaring at the same time, that neither under Elizabeth, nor his father, had any priest been put to death merely for religion : and Goodman escaped, because they were ashamed of giving orders themselves for an act of cruelty, which they would fain have compelled the King to commit. But so strictly did they enforce restrictive laws, which nothing but the plainest state necessity could ever justify, that the Romanists were compelled to perform their worship at midnight, and that always in fear and danger.

By one of their laws the theatres were suppressed, and the players to be fined for the first offence, whipped for the second. By another, Maypoles were to be taken down as a heathenish vanity, abused to superstition and wickedness. Some zealots having voluntarily agreed to fast one day in the week, for the purpose of contributing the value of the meal to what they called the good cause, an ordinance was passed, that all within the bills of mortality should pay upon every Tuesday, for three months, the value of an ordinary meal for themselves and families ; and in case of non-payment, distress was to be made for double the amount ; the intent of this being, that the burden might not rest alone upon the willing party. The monthly fast happening to fall on Christmas-day, was ordered to be observed with the more solemn humiliation ; because, said these hypocrites, it may call to remembrance our sins and the sins of our forefathers, who have turned this feast, pretending the memory of Christ, into an extreme forgetfulness of him, by giving liberty to carnal and sensual delights.

Many of those venerable structures, which were the glory of the land, had been destroyed at the Reformation, by the sacrilegious rapacity of those statesmen and favourites, to whom they had been iniquitously granted. The remainder were now threatened with the same fate by the coarse and brutal spirit of triumphant Puritanism. Lord Brooke (who had succeeded to the title and estates, not to the feelings and opinions, of one of the profoundest thinkers whom this or any other country has

produced) said, he hoped to * see the day, when not one stone of St Paul's should be left upon another. A sentiment of vulgar malice toward Laud may have instigated the ruling faction, when they demolished with axes and hammers the carved work of that noble † structure, and converted the body of the church into a stable for their troopers' horses. But in other places, where they had no such odious motives, they committed the like and even worse indecencies and outrages, merely to shew their hatred of the Church. It was such acts of sacrilege which brought a scandal and an odium upon the reformed religion in France and the Low Countries, and stopped its progress there, which neither the Kings of France nor Spain could have done, if horror and indignation had not been excited against it, by this brutal and villanous fanaticism. In some churches they baptized horses or swine, in profane mockery of baptism: in others, they broke open the tombs, and scattered about the bones of the dead, or, if the bodies were entire, they defaced and dismembered them. At Sudley ‡ they made a slaughterhouse of the chancel, cut up the carcasses upon the communion table, and threw the garbage into the vault of the Chandoses, insulting thus the remains of some of the most heroic men, who, in their day, defended, and did honour to their country. At Westminster, the soldiers sate smoking and drinking at the altar, and lived in the abbey, committing every kind of indecency there, which the Parliament saw and permitted. No cathedral escaped without some injury; painted windows were broken; statues pulled down or mutilated; carvings demolished; the organs sold piecemeal for the value of the materials, or set up in taverns. At Lambeth, Parker's monument was thrown down, that Scott, to whom the Palace had been allotted for his portion of the spoils, might convert the chapel into a hall; the Archbishop's body was taken, not out of his grave alone, but out of his coffin; the lead in which it had been enclosed was sold, and the remains were buried in a dunghill.§

A device was soon found for ejecting the loyal clergy—all, indeed, who were not prepared to go all lengths with the Root and Branch men. The better to secure the assistance of the Scotch against the King, the two Houses passed an Act that the Covenant should be taken, whereby all who subscribed it bound themselves to endeavour the extirpation of Episcopal Church government. All persons above the age of eighteen were re-

* Laud's History of his Troubles, p. 201.

† Sir P. Warwick, p. 80.

‡ Mercurius Rusticus, p. 58.

§ Strype's Parker, p. 499.

quired to take it; and such ministers as refused, were reported to Parliament as malignants, and proceeded against accordingly. No fewer than seven * thousand clergymen were upon this ground ejected from their livings, so faithful were the great body of the clergy in the worst of times. The extent of private misery and ruin which this occasioned, aggravated, in no slight degree, the calamities of civil war. It was not till some years had elapsed that a fifth part of the income was ordered to be paid to the wives and children of the sequestered ministers: the order had no retrospective effect; in most instances it was disregarded, for the principles by which the intrusive incumbents obtained their preferment very generally hardened their hearts,† . . . and the claimants were wholly at their mercy; and even had it been scrupulously paid, few were the cases wherein such a provision could have preserved the injured parties from utter want. The treatment, indeed, of the loyal clergy was to the last degree inhuman. Neither eminent talents, nor distinguished learning, nor exemplary virtues, could atone for the crime of fidelity to their order and their King. Chillingworth fell into the hands of Sir William Waller as a prisoner; he was of feeble constitution and ill at the time; but instead of shewing that reverence to his person, which he would have obtained from any noble enemy, the Puritan clergy, who attended Waller's army, used him with such barbarity, that he died within a few days; nor did their inhumanity cease even with his death, for Chevnel one of the most outrageous preachers of the party, pronounced a speech of infamous abuse over his grave, and threw into it to rot, as he said, with its author, that book for which the name of Chillingworth ought to have been dear, not to the Church of England only, but to the whole Protestant world. In his case a peculiar degree of rancour may have been displayed, because Laud was his godfather and patron, and had reclaimed him from the Romish religion, into which he had been led astray; recovering thus for the Protestant cause one of its ablest and most distinguished champions. But even the doctrinal Puritans, who, opposing the Church in too many points, had thereby contributed to the success of those whom nothing short of its destruction would satisfy, were involved without discrimination, and without pity, in its ruin. They came under the common appellation of malignants, and perceived, when too late, that they had been in no slight degree instrumental to their own undoing. Prideaux,

* Walker, xviii.

† Ibid. p. 101.

† Clarendon, vol. ii. part ii. p. 708.
Walker, part ii. p. 63.

the Bishop of Worcester, who was reduced to such distress,* that in his will he could bequeath his children nothing but "pious poverty, God's blessing, and a father's prayers," used in his latter days to say, that though he and Laud could never understand one another till it was too late, he now revered no man more, for that the Primate had wisely foreseen what lay hid to many others.

Such of the loyal clergy as were only plundered and turned out to find subsistence for their wives and families as they could, or to starve, were fortunate, when compared with many of their brethren. Some were actually † murdered; others perished in consequence of brutal usage, or of confinement in close unwholesome prisons, or on shipboard, where they were crowded together under ‡ hatches, day and night, without even straw to lie on. An intention was avowed of selling them as slaves to the Plantations, || or to the Turks and Algerines; and though this was not carried into effect, it seems to have been more than a threat for the purpose of extorting large ransoms from those who could raise money, because, after the battle of Worcester, many of the prisoners were actually shipped for Barbadoes and sold there.

The clergy, amid all their afflictions, had the consolation of knowing that they suffered in a righteous cause; they had the sympathy and the prayers of thousands to support them, and, above all, the approbation of their own hearts. Not one of them, in the depth of their earthly misery, was in so pitiable a state as the unhappy, though highly-gifted person, into whose mouth the first guilty motion for destroying the fabric of the Church government had been put by men more designing, and truer to their purpose. Perceiving how he had been duped, he resisted in the manliest manner, and with his characteristic eloquence, the measures against the Church, each more violent than the former, which were now brought forward. The Puritans flattered him as long as he was their tool, and he enjoyed for a time all the honours of a hollow popularity: when they could no longer cajole him, they began to advise and to expostulate with him first, then acrimoniously to censure and severely to condemn him. Sir Edward, upon this, printed a collection of his speeches

* It was this prelate who, being asked by one of his friends how he did, replied, "Never better in my life, only I have too great a stomach; for I have eaten that little plate which the sequestrators left me; I have eaten a great library of excellent books; I have eaten a great deal of linen; much of my brass, some of my pewter; and now I am come to

eat iron; and what will come next I know not."—Walker, part ii. p. 78.

† A nephew of Sir W. Raleigh, of whom Chillingworth said he was the best disputant he ever met withal, came to this fate.—Walker, part ii. p. 71.

‡ Walker, part ii. p. 146.

|| Ibid. 58, p. i.

in matters of religion, for vindication of his name. In this publication he spoke of the part which he had borne in "striking the first blow at the tallest cedar on the Church's Lebanon;" still applauding himself for what he had done, but bearing a just and generous testimony to that magnanimous sufferer, whose whole merit he was not yet capable of appreciating rightly. "His intent of public uniformity," said he, "was a good purpose, though in the way of his pursuit thereof he was extremely faulty. His book lately set forth hath muzzled the Jesuit, and shall strike the Papists under the fifth rib when he is dead and gone. And being dead, wheresoever his grave shall be, Paul's will be his perpetual monument, and his own book his lasting epitaph. It is true, the roughness of his uncourtly nature sent most men discontented from him; yet would he often of himself find ways and means to sweeten many of them when they least looked for it. Lastly, he was alway one and the same man. Begin with him at Oxford, and so go on to Canterbury, he is unmoved, unchanged. He never complied with the times, but kept his own stead till the times came up to him."

He spake also against those who had overheated a furnace that was burning hot before; and with pressing for ruin, had betrayed the time of a blessed reforming. "Take it upon you," said he, "for upon you, and the blind ignorant wilfulness of such as you, I do here charge the sad account of the loss of such a glorious reformation, as being the revived image of the best and purest ages, would with its beauty and piety have drawn the eye and heart of all Christendom unto us. The horse leech's daughters do cry, 'Give, give!' and you that might have had enough, do still cry, 'More, more!' . . . These things thus pressed and pursued, I do not see but on that rise of the Kingship and Priestship of every particular man, the wicked sweetness of a popular parity may hereafter labour to bring the King down to be but as the first among the Lords: and then if (as a gentleman of the House professed his desire to me) we can but bring the Lords down into our House among us again, *εὖρηκα*, all's done! No: rather all's undone, by breaking asunder that well-ordered chain of government, which from the chair of Jupiter reacheth down by several golden even links to the protection of the poorest creature that now lives among us."

For thus vindicating himself and publishing his own speeches in Parliament, Sir Edward Dering was expelled the House, and his book was burnt by the common hangman: such was the temper of the Puritans, and such the liberty which was enjoyed

under their dominion. He would also have been committed to the Tower, if he had not escaped by disguising himself in the habit of a clergyman, and reading prayers in a church in that character. After a while he joined the King, and served in his army, till either because he had acquired a liking for the clerical functions, while he had performed them, or that the calamitous state of the nation, which had wrecked his fortune, had affected his reason also, he requested the King to bestow upon him the Deanery of Canterbury. An aberration of mind, as it is the most charitable, is also the most likely solution of his conduct; for being refused the preferment which with such glaring inconsistency he solicited, he deserted the royal cause, and arriving at the outworks of the metropolis, under a false name, presented himself before the Parliament, as the first person who came in under their proclamation* to compound for his delinquency. They committed him for the present, and afterwards discharged him upon a disgraceful petition, whereby he ruined his character without retrieving his fortune. For though he was allowed to compound, no favour was shewn him; and having incurred the contempt of all parties, and the condemnation of his own heart, he ended his life in poverty and disgrace.

This most unhappy man would have gone down to the grave with a heavier weight of misery on his head, if he had lived to see the fate of that "tallest cedar on the Church's Lebanon," against which he boasted that it had been his fortune to strike the first stroke. The attack on Laud had no sooner been commenced, than his adversaries, in whom political animosity had assumed the odious character of personal hatred, gave free scope to their malignity. The base crew of libellers, by whom he was assailed through the press, were not less virulent than his Parliamentary enemies. Sir Harbottle Grimston† called him the sty of all pestilential filth that had infested the state, . . . the corrupt fountain that had corrupted all the streams, . . . the great and common enemy of all goodness and good men. When the Primate was taken from Lambeth, in custody of the officer of the black rod, hundreds of the poor neighbours waited at the gates, to see him go, praying heartily for his safe return: a gratifying testimony of their grateful affection, for which he blessed God and them. The articles against him were presented to the House of Lords by Pym, Hambden, and Maynard, the former pronouncing him to have been "the highest, the boldest, and most impudent oppressor that ever was an oppressor both of King and

* Whitelock, p. 81.

† Rushworth, vol. iii. part i. p. 122.

people." He was charged with endeavouring to introduce into the kingdom an arbitrary and tyrannical government, and procuring divers sermons and other discourses to be preached and published, for the better accomplishment of this traitorous design. "Truly," said Pym, "a prodigious crime, that the truth of God and His holy law should be perverted, to defend the lawlessness of men ; that the holy and sacred function of the ministry, which was ordained for instruction of men's souls in the ways of God, should be so abused, that the ministers are become the trumpets of sedition, the promoters and defenders of violence and oppression." Pym was no fanatic : his mind was too clear and logical to deceive itself, when he thus charged upon Laud the notorious practices of his own party ; and this sentence was uttered in the temper of a successful demagogue, who had cast off shame as well as compunction, to qualify himself for the course which he was determined to pursue.

The other charges were for perverting and selling justice, and taking unlawful gifts and bribes ; for traitorously causing canons to be composed and published without lawful authority, and imposing in one of them a wicked and ungodly oath upon the clergy ; for assuming a papal and tyrannical power, endeavouring to subvert God's true religion, set up Popish superstition and idolatry instead thereof, and confederating with Popish priests and Jesuits, to reconcile the Church of England with the Church of Rome ; causing orthodox ministers to be suspended and otherwise grieved without just cause ; traitorously endeavouring to cause discord between the Church of England and other reformed Churches, to stir up war with Scotland, and by false and malicious slanders to incense his Majesty against Parliaments. That Laud believed the authority of the King to be absolute, in an age when it had never been defined, is certain ; and that he had borne an active part in the measures of a government conducted upon arbitrary principles : but by no principle of law could this be constructed into treason. The most oppressive acts to which he had ever been consenting were far less so than the manner in which he was now prosecuted ; and for the other accusations against him, those which were not frivolous were false, and must have been known to be so by the men who promoted them. The charges which the Scotch commissioners produced against him were of the same stamp, proving not less the narrowness of mind, than the malice of those who advanced them : among other things, they accused him of requiring the Scotch Bishops to be present at Divine service in their *whites*, of

calling the Covenant ungodly, of railing against their General Assembly, and of being so industrious in advancing Popery, that the Pope himself could not have been more Popish, had he been in his place.

The Archbishop was detained ten weeks in charge of the black rod, the enormous sum of twenty nobles a-day being exacted from him for diet and custody. He was then committed to the Tower. The removal took place at noon, that being thought the fittest time for privateness when the citizens were at dinner; but the 'prentices followed him with clamours and revilings, "even beyond barbarity itself," till he entered the Tower gate. "I bless God for it," said the object of this vulgar persecution; "my patience was not moved; I looked upon a higher cause than the tongues of Shimei and his children." There he was left for many months, to "the great weakening," says he, "of my aged body and waste of my poor fortune; whereas all that I do desire, is a just and fair trial, with such an issue, better or worse, as it shall please God to give." While he was thus confined, the great Oriental scholar Pocock, whom he had employed to travel and collect manuscripts in the East, returned to England, and with a becoming sense of gratitude and duty, waited upon his patron in prison. He delivered him a message from Hugo Grotius, himself at that time a fugitive, having been driven from his country by the Calvinistic party. Grotius entreated him to make his escape if possible, and cross the sea, there to preserve himself for better times, or at least to obtain security from the malice of his enemies and the rage of a deluded people. The Lord-Keeper, and one of the principal Secretaries, had already taken this course. Laud, however, without hesitation, answered that he could not comply with his friends' advice. "An escape," said he, "is feasible enough; yea, 'tis, I believe, the very thing my enemies desire, for every day an opportunity for it is presented, a passage being left free in all likelihood for this purpose, that I should endeavour to take the advantage of it. But they shall not be gratified by me. I am almost seventy years old; shall I now go about to prolong a miserable life by the trouble and shame of flying? And were I willing to go, whither should I fly? Should I go into France or any other Popish country, it would give some seeming grounds to that charge of Popery, which they have endeavoured, with so much industry and so little reason, to fasten upon me. But if I should get into Holland, I should expose myself to the insults of those sectaries there, to whom my character is odious, and have every Anabaptist come

and pull me by the beard. No; I am resolved not to think of flight; but patiently to expect and bear what a good and wise Providence hath provided for me, of what kind soever it shall * be."

Orders were given that he should not be permitted to see Strafford; and this order was enforced, even when Strafford, on the night before his execution, requested the lieutenant of the Tower that, if it were possible, he might speak with the Archbishop, saying, "You shall hear what passeth between us, for it is not a time now either for him to plot heresy, or me to plot treason." The lieutenant answered, that he was bound by his orders, and advised him to petition Parliament for that favour. "No," replied Strafford; "I have gotten my despatch from them, and will trouble them no more. I am now petitioning a higher court, where neither partiality can be expected nor error feared." Then turning to Usher, the Primate of Ireland, he said, "My Lord, I will tell you what I should have spoken to my Lord's Grace of Canterbury. You shall desire the Archbishop to lend me his prayers this night, and to give me his blessing when I do go abroad to-morrow; and to be in his window, that by my last farewell I may give him thanks for this and all his other former favours." When Usher delivered this mournful message, Laud replied, that in conscience he was bound to the first, and in duty and obligation to the second; but he feared weakness and passion would not lend him eyes to behold his last departure. "The next morning," says† Laud, "as he passed by, he turned towards me and took the solemnest leave that I think was ever, by any at distance, taken one of another." Solemn indeed it was, beyond all example; for Strafford halted before the window, and when his old and venerable friend came to it, bowed himself to the ground and said, "My Lord, your prayers and your blessing!" Laud lifted up his hands and bestowed both, and then, overcome with grief, fell to the ground senseless; while Strafford, bowing himself a second time, said, "Farewell, my Lord. God protect your innocence!" When the Primate recovered his senses, he said, as if fearing that what had passed might be deemed an unmanly and unbecoming weakness, he trusted, by God's assistance, that when he should come to his own execution, the world would perceive he had been more sensible of Lord Strafford's fate than of his own.

The villanous enemies of these illustrious men published,‡

* Twell's Life of Pocock, p. 83, ed. 1816.

† Hist. of his Troubles, p. 179.
‡ Ibid.

among other falsehoods, that Strafford had bitterly cursed the Archbishop at his death, as one whose counsels had been the ruin of him and his house. The blood of one victim only made them more greedy for that of the other. Libels and doggerel ballads against the surviving object of their hatred were hawked and sung through the streets, and caricatures exhibited, in which he was represented as caged, or chained to a post; and with such things, the rabble made sport at taverns and alehouses, being as drunk with malice, as with the liquor they swilled in. He consoled himself with thinking, that he had fallen but into the same case as David, "for they that sat in the gate spake against me, and I was the song of the drunkards."* Much more, and with much greater cause, was he affected by the death of an old steward, who had faithfully served him full forty and two years, and was now become almost the only comfort of his affliction and his age. His jurisdiction was now sequestered, with all his rents and profits; money was even taken from his receiver (about fourscore pounds) for the maintenance, it was pretended, of the King's children: "God, of his mercy," said the Primate, "look favourably upon the King, and bless his children† from needing any such poor maintenance!" After a severe illness, during which he lost the use of his limbs, when for the first time he was able, between the help of his man and his staff, to go to the Tower Church, the Puritan who preached introduced so much personal abuse of him in the sermon, in such foul terms, and with such palpable virulence, that women and boys stood up in the church to see how he could bear it. But he thanked‡ God for his patience, and prayed forgiveness for his deluded persecutors. There were some who wished to transport him to New England, that the sectarians there might insult over his fall. Hugh Peters was a principal contriver of this scheme, and a motion to that effect was made in the House of Commons, but rejected;§ for the Parliament had determined, as in the case of Strafford, to wrest the laws to their purpose, and commit murder with all the abused forms and solemnities of justice.

Prynne, as being the Archbishop's implacable enemy, and therefore one whose malice might be trusted, was sent to seize his papers, and search his person. He took not only his private diary, but also his book of private devotions, written with his own hand; "Nor could I," says Laud, "get him to leave this last, but he must needs see what passed between God and me."||

* Hist. of his Troubles, p. 180.

† Ibid. p. 197.

‡ Ibid. p. 196.

§ Ibid. p. 203.

|| Ibid. p. 206.

Prynne had been more cruelly treated than any other person by the Star Chamber; the manner in which he now revenged himself has fixed an indelible stain upon his character, which, otherwise, with all his errors, would have been entitled to respect. When he took away the papers which the Archbishop had prepared for his defence, and all the other writings which he could find, he promised that they should be restored in three or four days; instead of fulfilling that promise, he restored only three bundles out of twenty-one, employed against him at his trial such as might seem prejudicial to his cause, suppressed those which might have been advantageous, published many, embezzled some, and kept the others to the day of his death. More villanously still, when he published Laud's private diary, he omitted those passages which expressed his conscientious attachment to the Church of England; a wickedness which would never have been brought to light, if Archbishop Sheldon had not obtained an order after Prynne's death for the restoration of such of the papers as could be found among his effects. To keep up the popular cry against their victim, it was proclaimed from the pulpit that Prynne had found a book in his pocket, which would discover great things. The sole indulgence he could obtain was, that he might have copies of any of the papers which had been taken from him, but it must be at his own cost; this when his estates had been all confiscated, and his goods sold, before he was ever heard in his own defence!

There is reason to believe that his trial had been thus long delayed (for he had been more than two years in confinement), because some of the party, though they were determined upon his ruin, were yet unwilling to incur the guilt and infamy of putting him to death. One of them said it would be happy both for him and the Parliament, if God would be pleased to take him out of the way. . . . But they who once engage in iniquitous designs miserably deceive themselves, when they think that they will go so far and no further: one villany begets another, one crime renders another necessary; and thus they are impelled continually downward into the depth of guilt, which, at the commencement of their career, they would have died rather than have incurred. One of these persons (a man, too, who was bound in gratitude to Laud), in answer to an observation that the Archbishop was a good man, replied,* "Be he never so good, we must now make him ill for our own sakes." Whitelock was named upon the committee to manage the evidence against him;

* Laud's Hist. of his Troubles, p. 217.

but he declined * acting, saying that the Archbishop had taken special care of his breeding at St John's College, and it would be disingenuous and ungrateful to be personally instrumental in taking away the life of his benefactor. The task of providing the evidence was intrusted to Prynne, who was never weary in seeking to revenge himself. Nothing could be more shameless than the manner in which he schooled the witnesses; and yet with all their tampering, the single charge against the Archbishop which would have subjected him to legal punishment, that of perverting and selling justice, was found so utterly unsupported even by any shadow of proof, that it was abandoned upon the trial.

Well knowing to what outrages and insults he should be exposed, Laud was strongly tempted to make no defence, but throw himself upon God's mercy, rather than endure them. "But," said † he, "when I consider what offence I should commit therein against the course of justice, that that might not proceed in the ordinary way; what offence against my own innocency and my good name, which I was bound both in nature and conscience to maintain by all good means; but especially what offence against God, as if He were not able to protect me, or not willing, in case it stood with my eternal happiness, and His blessed will of trial of me in the mean time; when I considered this, I humbly besought God for strength and patience, and resolved to undergo all scorn, and whatsoever else might happen to me, rather than betray my innocency to the malice of any."

Both were given him, to the comfort and admiration of his friends, and beyond the expectation of his enemies. Sergeant Wilde introduced the case by a virulent speech, in which he affirmed that, if all former oppressions, pernicious practices, and machinations, which had been employed to ruin our religion, laws, and liberties, were lost, they might here have been found, and drawn out again to the life: that it was a charge of treason in all and every part, treason in the highest pitch and altitude. After the fiery persecutions of Queen Mary's days, the massacres in France, the treasons against Queen Elizabeth, and the Gunpowder Plot, for any man now to go about to rebuild those walls of Jericho, and reduce us to those rotten principles of error and darkness, what could be expected, but that the people should be ready to stone him? He had exposed and prostituted the Sabbath to all looseness and irreligion, and that by a law; he had

* Whitelock, p. 75.

† Hist. of his Troubles, p. 217.

made a ladder for himself to climb up to papal dignity ; and it appeared by his own diary, that a Cardinal's cap had been offered him ; but such was his modesty to forbear it, because though Rome be a true visible Church, in his opinion, yet something dwelt with him that hindered it for a time, . . . to wit, said this wicked advocate, I suppose his dwelling here, till this his leprosy had so infected all, that there remained no other cure but the sword of justice.

Troubled as Laud was at hearing himself thus vilified, he collected himself, and requested of the Lords, that they would expect proof before they gave belief to these loud but loose assertions. Innocent as he was, and being what he was, for him to plead for life at that bar, was worse than losing it. "As for the sentence," said he, "(I thank God for it), I am at St Paul's ward : 'If I have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die ;' for I bless God, I have so spent my time, as that I am neither ashamed to live, nor afraid to die ; nor can the world be more weary of me than I of it : for seeing the malignity which hath been raised against me, I have carried my life in my hands these divers years * past." With regard to the charge of seeking to overthrow the laws, he said, his soul had always hated an arbitrary government, and that he had ever believed and preached that human laws bind the conscience, and had himself made conscience of observing them. "As for religion," he continued, "I was born and bred up in and under the Church of England, as it yet stands established by law : I have, by God's blessing and the favour of my Prince, grown up in it to the years which are now upon me, and to the place of preferment which I yet bear ; and in this Church, by the grace and goodness of God, I resolve to die. I have ever, since I understood aught in divinity, kept one constant tenour in this my profession, without variation, or shifting from one opinion to another for any worldly ends ; and if my conscience would have suffered me to shift tenets or religion with time and occasion, I could easily have slid through all the difficulties which have pressed upon me in this kind. But of all diseases, I have ever hated a palsy in religion ; well knowing, that too often a dead-palsy ends that disease in the fearful forgetfulness of God and his judgments. Ever since I came in place, I laboured nothing more than that the external public worship of God (too much slighted in most parts of this kingdom) might be preserved, and that with as much decency and uniformity as might be ; being still of opinion, that unity

* Hist. of his Troubles, p. 222.

cannot long continue in the Church, where uniformity is shut out at the church-door; and I evidently saw that the public neglect of God's service on the outward face of it, and the nasty lying of many places dedicated to that service, had almost cast a damp upon the true and inward worship of God, which, while we live in the body, needs external helps, and all little enough to keep it in any vigour. And this I did to the uttermost of my knowledge, according both to law and canon, and with the consent and liking of the people; nor did any command issue out from me against the one, or without the other, that I know of.*

"'Tis charged that I have endeavoured to bring in Popery. Perhaps, my Lords, I am not ignorant what party of men have raised this scandal upon me, nor for what end; nor, perhaps, by whom set on: but I would fain have a good reason given me, if my conscience lead me that way, and that with my conscience I could subscribe to the Church of Rome, what should have kept me here, before my imprisonment, to endure the libels, and the slanders, and the base usage of all kinds which have been put upon me, and these to end in this question for my life? . . . Is it because of any pledges I have in the world to sway against my conscience? No, sure! For I have no wife nor children to cry out upon me to stay with them; and if I had, I hope the call of my conscience should be heard above them. Is it because I was loth to leave the honour and the profit of the place I was risen unto? I desire your Lordships and all the world should know I do much scorn honour and profit, both the one and the other, in comparison of my conscience: besides, it cannot be imagined by any reasonable man, but that if I could have complied with Rome, I should not have wanted either. Is it because I lived here at ease, and was loth to venture the loss of that? Not so neither; for whatsoever the world may be pleased to think, I have led a very painful life, and such as I could have been very well content to change, had I well known how. Let nothing be spoken against me but truth, and I do here challenge whatsoever is between Heaven and Hell to say three words against me in point of my religion; in which, by God's grace, I have ever hated dissimulation: and had I not hated it, perhaps it might have been better with me for worldly safety than now it is. But it can no way become a Christian bishop to halt with God."†

He then stated what persons he had, by his individual exertions, preserved or reclaimed from Popery. Buckingham was

* Hist. of his Troubles, pp. 224, 225.

† Ibid.

one, Chillingworth another. When the business of the day was over, Hugh Peters followed him out of the House and abused him, till the Earl of * Essex accidentally came up, and with an honourable feeling, delivered him from the insults of this brutal fanatic. In no case where the appearance of law was thought necessary for destroying an obnoxious individual, has the determination to destroy him ever been more decidedly manifested throughout the whole proceedings. The weightiest proofs which could be produced of his traitorous endeavours to introduce a tyrannical government were a passage in his diary, and a few words which he was accused of having spoken at the council table. He had entered in his diary that, upon the Scotch rebellion, Strafford and Hamilton, and he himself, proposed a Parliament, and these words followed, "a resolution voted at the board to assist the King in extraordinary ways, if the Parliament should prove peevish and refuse," &c. There was no proof that he had advised that vote, and he demanded whether, though the epithet peevish were a very peevish word, he might not write it in his private notes without treason? The other charge was, that after the dissolution of the last Parliament he had said to the King, now he might use his own power. This was attested by Sir Henry Vane the elder, whose hands were so ingrained with the blood of Strafford, that no second act of the same kind could fix a stain upon them. The Archbishop denied the words, either in terms or in sense, to the uttermost of his knowledge; and if he had spoken them, either, he said, they were ill-advised, but no treason; or treasonable, and then he ought, by law, to have been tried for them within six months. And, moreover, they were charged upon him by a single witness. "Strange," said he, "it is to me, that at such a full table, no person of honour should remember such a speech but Sir Henry Vane. He is a man of some years, and memory is one of the first powers of man on which age works; and yet his memory so good, so fresh, that he alone can remember words spoken at a full council table, which no person of honour remembers but himself. But I would not have him brag of it; for I have read in St Augustin, that *quidam pessimi*, some, even the worst of men, have great memories, and are *tanto peiores*, so much the worse for them. God bless Sir Henry!" †

These charges, utterly untenable as they were upon any principle of law, were the weightiest which could be brought against him. The others proved only, in many instances, the falsehood

* Hist. of his Troubles, p. 228.

† Ibid. p. 232.

of the witnesses, and in all, the malice of the prosecutors. It was made a charge of treason against him, that when in the progress of repairing St Paul's, it was necessary to demolish some of the houses which had been built about it, a committee had been appointed with power to compound with the tenants, or pull the houses down if they would not compound: that the goldsmiths had been forbidden to keep their shops anywhere but in Cheapside and Lombard Street: and that, as appeared by his diary, he meant to support the London clergy in their claim of tithes. The sentences of Prynne and the other libellers were brought forward as treasonable acts in him; the censures passed for nonconformity, and every petty case of ecclesiastical jurisdiction which could be made to appear as a grievance; the prolongation of the convocation; the canons; the language in which the university had addressed him; his having mended the painted window at Lambeth, the pictures in his gallery, the missals in his study. "True, my Lords," replied the indignant Prelate, "I had many, but I had more of the Greek liturgies than the Roman: and I had as many of both as I could get. And I would fain know how we shall answer their errors if we may not have their books? I had liturgies, all I could get, both ancient and modern. I had also the Alcoran in divers copies; if this be an argument, why do they not accuse me to be a Turk?" *

The trial, if so it may be called, lasted twenty days, during which Laud displayed a courage answerable to his cause and character, and a promptitude not to have been expected at his years. With such a brave innocence did he defend himself, and so utterly demolish the evidence against him, in spite of all the care with which it had been concerted, that, possessed as the citizens were with the spirit of sectarian rancour, some of them admitted he had answered many things very well; yet, they added, he must suffer somewhat for the honour of the House. On the day appointed for his defence Prynne published his diary, garbled in some parts, and interpolated in others, artfully and wickedly; and when the Archbishop came to the bar, he saw that the book had been presented † to every one of the Lords who were to pronounce sentence on him. A little while the sight troubled him, as it was designed to do; but comforting himself with that trust in God, which never for a moment forsook him through all his long affliction, he entered upon his defence, and entreated the House to bear in mind that he had

* Hist. of his Troubles, p. 232.

† Ibid. p. 412.

been sifted to the very bran, . . . "My diary," said he, "nay, my very prayer-book taken from me, and used against me, and that in some cases not to prove, but to make a charge. Yet I am thus far glad even for this; for by my diary your Lordships have seen the passages of my life; and by my prayer-book the greatest secrets between God and my soul; so that you have me at the very bottom; yet, blessed be God, no disloyalty is found in the one, no Popery in the other." * Then briefly but forcibly going over the charges and the evidence against him, he answered the assertion of the prosecutors, that though none of these actions were urged against him as treason, yet the result of all amounted to it. † "I must be bold to tell your Lordships," said he, "that if no particular which is charged upon me be treason, the result from them cannot; for the result must be of the same nature and species with the particulars from which it rises, and this holds in nature, in morality, and in law. So this imaginary result is a monster in nature, in morality, and in law; and if it be nourished, will devour all the safety of the subject of England, which now stands so well fenced by the known law of the land. And, therefore, I humbly desire your Lordships, not for mine, but for the public's sake, to weigh this business well before this gap be made so wide, as there will hardly be power left again to shut it." ‡

So admirably did he vindicate himself upon the matters of fact, and so ably were the points of law argued for him by his counsel, Hearne and Hale (afterwards Sir Matthew), that it was found impossible, even by the handful of Peers who sat in judgment on him, obsequious as they were to a tyrannical House of Commons, and deep as they were in infamy, to pronounce him guilty. But the dominant faction resolved, as in Strafford's case, that when law could not be stretched to their purpose, their own authority should stand in its place; and they brought in a Bill of Attainder, which was supported less strongly by argument than by a mob of petitioners calling out for his blood; the people were actually exhorted to set their hands to this petition in the churches; and the civil authorities made no attempt to check a proceeding as illegal as it was scandalous and inhuman. § Laud

* Hist. of his Troubles, p. 413.

† When after this he was heard by his counsel, Sergeant Wilde, on behalf of the Commons, repeated that though it was not alleged that any one of his crimes amounted to a treason or felony, yet all his misdemeanours put together did, by way of accumulation, make many grand

treasons. To which the Archbishop's advocate replied, "I crave your mercy, good Mr Sergeant, I never understood before this time, that two hundred couple of black rabbits would make a black horse."

‡ Hist. of his Troubles, p. 419.

§ Ibid. pp. 431, 432.

was admitted to speak in his own behalf. The substance of the proceedings in the Upper House having been recapitulated against him by Mr Brown, the clerk of that House, with less asperity than the other prosecutors had used, the Archbishop thanked him for his humanity. "This worthy gentleman," said he, "hath pressed all things as hardly against me as the cause can any way bear; that was his duty to this honourable House, and it troubles me not. But his carriage and expressions were civil towards me, in this my great affliction; and for this I render him humble and hearty thanks, having from other hands pledged my Saviour in gall and vinegar, and drunk up the cup of the scornings of the people to the very bottom. I shall follow everything in the same order he proceeded in; so far forth at least as an old slow hand could take them, a heavy heart observe them, and an old decayed memory retain them."* He did this with clearness and precision; and reminded the Commons that the evidence, as it was laid before them, was but upon the collection and judgment of one man, whose opinion might differ much from that of the judges themselves, and who having been absent on some of the days, could, of course, in that part of the proceedings, report only what others had reported to him, what came from him being, at best, a report of evidence, and not upon oath. No person had ever given a verdict upon such grounds; and it was for that House, as the great preserver of the laws and liberties of the subject, to consider how far it might trench upon these, in future consequences, if these great boundaries were laid loose and open. He desired that they would take into consideration his calling, his age, his former life, his fall, his long and strict imprisonment. "In my prosperity (said the venerable sufferer), I bless God for it, I was never puffed up into vanity, whatever the world may think of me. And in these last full four years' durance, I thank the same God, *gravem fortunam constanter tuli*, I have with decent constancy borne the weight of a pressing fortune: and I hope God will strengthen me unto, and in, the end of it. Mr Speaker (he continued), I am very aged, considering the turmoils of my life, and I daily find in myself more decays than I make show of; and the period of my life, in the course of nature, cannot be far off. It cannot but be a great grief unto me to stand at these years thus charged before ye. Yet give me leave to say thus much without offence; whatsoever errors or faults I may have committed by the way, in any my proceedings through human infirmity (as who is he that

* Hist. of his Troubles, p. 434.

hath not offended, and broken some statute laws too, by ignorance, or misapprehension, or forgetfulness, at some sudden time of action?) yet, if God bless me with so much memory, I will die with these words in my mouth, that I never intended, much less endeavoured, the subversion of the laws of the kingdom; nor the bringing in of Popish superstition upon the true Protestant religion, established by law in this kingdom.”*

The strength with which he defended himself was felt and acknowledged even by many of the members; but truth and eloquence were as little regarded in those calamitous days as law, justice, and humanity, and without hearing counsel in his behalf, the Commons voted him guilty of high treason. There was yet honour enough among the few Lords who adhered to the Parliament through all its courses, to hesitate at passing a bill so flagrantly iniquitous; but the Earl of Pembroke, one of the meanest wretches that ever brought infamy upon an old and honourable name for the sake of currying favour with a ruling faction, called the Primate rascal and villain, and told the Lords that if they demurred, the citizens would come down and call for justice, as they had done in Strafford’s case.† Mr Stroud also, who came up with a message from the Commons to quicken the Upper House, let fall the same threat.‡ And when they voted that all papers relating to the trial should be laid before them, the Commons, to intimidate them, prepared an ordinance to displace them from all command in the army, and by their old agents procured a petition to be got up for the punishment of delinquents, and for bringing the Lords to vote and sit with the Commons, to the end that public business might be more quickly despatched. At length, when only fourteen Lords were present, they voted him guilty of endeavouring to subvert the laws and the Protestant religion, and of being an enemy to Parliaments; but left it for the judges to pronounce whether this were treason; and the judges, to their lasting honour, unanimously declared that nothing which was charged against the Archbishop was treason, by any known and established law of the land. In the face of this determination, the Commons persisted in their murderous purpose: the Peers, who shrunk from a more active participation in the crime, shrunk from their duty also, absenting themselves from the House, and six were found thoroughpaced enough to concur in the sentence of condemnation.

Such an issue had been foreseen, and a pardon, under the

* Hist. of his Troubles, p. 439.

† Ibid. p. 441.

‡ Ibid.

Great Seal, had been secretly conveyed to him from the King, which, if his persecutors proceeded with any regard to law, they must needs allow; if it failed, as there was too much reason to apprehend, it would at least manifest the King's justice and affection to an old faithful servant, whom he so much esteemed. This pardon he produced, when he was called upon to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon him. It was read in both Houses; but, as he expected, they, in their usurped and tyrannical authority, affirmed that the King could not pardon a judgment of Parliament. Being thus assured of death, "he neither entertained his sentence with a stoical apathy, nor wailed his fate with weak and womanish lamentations (to which extremes most men are carried in this case), but heard it with so even and so smooth a temper, as shewed he neither was ashamed to live, nor afraid to die." Up to that point he had composed the history of his troubles and trial, that when justice one day should be rendered to his memory, nothing might be wanting to his full and complete vindication. That task he now broke off, and prepared for death. He petitioned his iniquitous judges for two favours; the one, that three of his chaplains might be with him before and at his death; the other, that he might be beheaded, and not undergo the ignominious and barbarous sentence for treason in its full rigour. The Commons,* with a brutality worthy of their whole proceedings in this case, denied both: they only allowed that one of the chaplains, whom he named, might attend, with two of their own divines, appointing two of the most notorious incendiaries. . . . The Sheriffs attended in person, to know the manner of his execution (as if even the Sheriffs felt some shame, if not some compunction, at bearing a part in this flagrant inhumanity), and for an answer they were † referred to the warrant, that he should be hanged, drawn, and quartered. He petitioned the Lords a second time upon this point, on the grounds of his profession, his rank, and the dignity which he had held, as having sat in their House, and been of the King's Privy Council. The Lords sent it to the Lower House, signifying that for these reasons they had assented to it; and the Commons were then pleased to consent that he should only be beheaded; but this was not conceded by them till after ‡ some debate.

The night before his execution he ate a moderate supper, to refresh his spirits, and then going to bed, slept soundly till the hour when his attendants were appointed to await his rising.

* Whitelock, p. 123.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

When he was brought out of the Tower, the spectators "were so divided betwixt bemoaners and insulters, it was hard to decide which of them made up the most part." He proceeded with a cheerful countenance, and an unruffled mind, though Hugh Peters, and Sir John Clotworthy (a man worthy of such an associate), were all the way assailing him with inhuman interrogatories. These he took calmly, and "though some rude and uncivil people reviled him as he passed along with opprobrious language, as loth to let him go to the grave in peace, yet it never discomposed his thoughts, nor disturbed his patience. For he had profited so well in the school of Christ, that when he was reviled he reviled not again, but committed his cause to Him that judgeth righteously. And as he did not fear the frowns, so neither did he court the applause, of the vulgar herd, and therefore chose to read what he had to speak unto the people, rather than to affect the ostentation either of memory or wit in that dreadful agony."

"Good people," said he, "this is an uncomfortable time to preach, yet I shall begin with a text of Scripture (Hebrews xii. 1, 2): *Let us run with patience the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

"I have been long in my race, and how I have looked to Jesus, the author and finisher of my faith, He best knows. I am now come to the end, and here I find the cross, a death of shame; but the shame must be despised, . . . or no coming to the right hand of God! I am going apace, as you see, toward the Red Sea, and my feet are now upon the very brink of it: an argument, I hope, that God is bringing me into the land of promise, for that was the way through which He led his people. . . . But before they came to it He instituted a passover with them, . . . a lamb it was, but it must be eaten with sour herbs. I shall obey, and labour to digest the sour herbs as well as the lamb. And I shall remember it is the Lord's Passover; I shall not think of the herbs, nor be angry with the hand that gathereth them, but look up only unto Him who instituted that, and governs these. For men can have no more power over me than what is given them from above. I am not in love with this passage through the Red Sea, for I have the weakness and infirmities of flesh and blood plentifully in me, and I have prayed with my Saviour *ut transiret calix iste*, that this cup of Red Wine might pass from me. But if not, . . . God's will, not

man's, be done ! And I shall most willingly drink of this cup, as deep as He pleases, and enter into this sea, yea, and pass through it, in the way that He shall lead me."

Thus he began his dying address, in that state of calm but deepest feeling, when the mind seeks for fancies, and types, and dim similitudes, and extracts from them consolation and strength. What he said was delivered with a grave composure, so that "he appeared," says Sir Philip Warwick, "to make his own funeral sermon with less passion than he had in former times made the like for a friend." The hope which he had expressed at his last awful parting with Strafford, was now nobly justified : it was not possible for man, in those fearful circumstances, to have given proof of a serener courage, or of a more constant and well-founded faith. Nor did he let pass the opportunity of giving the people such admonition as the time permitted. "I know," said he, "my God whom I serve is as able to deliver me from this Sea of Blood, as he was to deliver the Three Children from the furnace ; and (I humbly thank my Saviour for it !) my resolution is now as theirs was then : they would *not worship the image the king had set up*, nor will I the imaginations which the people are setting up : nor will I forsake the temple and the truth of God, to follow the bleating of Jeroboam's calves in Dan and Bethel. And as for this people, they are at this day miserably misled (God of his mercy open their eyes, that they may see the right way !) for the blind lead the blind, and if they go on, both will certainly fall into the ditch."

He then spake of his innocence and the unprecedented manner of his condemnation. "You know," said he, "what the Pharisees said against Christ himself : '*If we let him alone*, all men will believe in him, *et venient Romani*, and the Romans will come, and take away both our place and nation.' See how just the judgment was ! They crucified Christ for fear, lest the Romans should come ; and his death was it which brought in the Romans upon them ; God punishing them with that which they most feared. And I pray God this clamour of *venient Romani*, of which I have given no cause, help not to bring them in ! For the Pope never had such an harvest in England since the Reformation, as he hath now upon the sects and divisions that are among us." Next he bore testimony to the King his gracious sovereign, as one whom, in his conscience, he knew to be a sound and sincere Protestant. He dwelt upon the popular clamours for justice, as a practice which might endanger many an innocent man and pluck his blood upon the heads of the people,

and of that great populous city: and he spake of the poor Church of England. "It hath flourished," said he, "and been a shelter to other neighbouring Churches, when storms have driven upon them. But, alas! now it is in a storm itself, and God only knows whether, or how, it shall get out. And, which is worse than the storm from without, it is become like an oak cleft to shivers with wedges made out of its own body, and at every cleft profaneness and irreligion is entering in; while (as Prosper speaks in his second book *de contemptu vitæ*) men that introduce profaneness are cloaked over with the name, *religionis imaginariæ*, of imaginary religion. For we have lost the substance, and dwell too much in opinion; and that Church, which all the Jesuits' machinations could not ruin, is fallen into danger by her own.

"The last particular (for I am not willing to be too long) is myself. I was born and baptized in the bosom of the Church of England established by law: in that profession I have ever since lived, and in that I come now to die. This is no time to dissemble with God, least of all in matters of religion; and therefore I desire it may be remembered, I have always lived in the Protestant religion established in England, and in that I come now to die. What clamours and slanders I have endured for labouring to keep an uniformity in the external service of God, according to the doctrine and discipline of the Church, all men know, and I have abundantly felt." Then he noticed the accusation of high treason. "Besides my answers to the several charges," said he, "I protested my innocency in both Houses. It was said, prisoners' protestations at the bar must not be taken. I can bring no witness of my heart and the intentions thereof; therefore I must come to my protestation, not at the bar, but my protestation at the hour and instant of my death: in which I hope all men will be such charitable Christians, as not to think I would die and dissemble, being instantly to give God an account for the truth of it. I do therefore here, in the presence of God and his holy angels, tell it upon my death, that I never endeavoured the subversion of law or religion; and I desire you all to remember this protest of mine, for my innocency in this, and from all treasons whatsoever. I have been accused, likewise, as an enemy to Parliaments: No; I understand them, and the benefit that comes by them, too well to be so. But I did mislike the misgovernment of some Parliamentary ways, and I had good reason for it. For *corruptio optimi est pessima*; there is no corruption in the world so bad as that which is of the best

thing within itself; for the better the thing is in nature, the worse it is corrupted. And that being the highest court, over which no other hath jurisdiction, when it is misinformed or misgoverned, the subject is left without all remedy. But I have done. I forgive all the world, all and every of those bitter enemies which have persecuted me: and humbly desire to be forgiven of God first, and then of every man, whether I have offended him or not; if he do but conceive that I have, Lord, do thou forgive me, and I beg forgiveness of him! And so I heartily desire you to join in prayer with me."

He had prepared a prayer for the occasion, and never was there a more solemn and impressive form of words; it is alike remarkable for the state of mind in which it was composed and uttered, the deep and passionate devotion which it breathes, and the last firm fervent avowal of that religious loyalty, for which he was at that instant about to die a martyr. To abridge it even of a word would be injurious, for if any human composition may be called sacred, this surely deserves to be so qualified. "O eternal God and merciful Father! look down upon me in mercy, in the riches and fulness of all thy mercies, look down upon me: but not till Thou hast nailed my sins to the cross of Christ, not till Thou hast bathed me in the blood of Christ, not till I have hid myself in the wounds of Christ, that so the punishment due unto my sins may pass over me. And since Thou art pleased to try me to the utmost, I humbly beseech Thee, give me now, in this great instant, full patience, proportionable comfort, and a heart ready to die for thine honour, the King's happiness, and the Church's preservation. And my zeal to this (far from arrogancy be it spoken!) is all the sin (human frailty excepted, and all the incidents thereunto) which is yet known to me in this particular, for which I now come to suffer: I say, in this particular of treason. But otherwise my sins are many and great: Lord, pardon them all; and those especially (whatever they are) which have drawn down this present judgment upon me! And when Thou hast given me strength to bear it, do with me as seems best in thine own eyes; and carry me through death, that I may look upon it in what visage soever it shall appear to me. Amen! And that there may be a stop of this issue of blood in this more than miserable kingdom (I shall desire that I may pray for the people too, as well as myself), O Lord, I beseech thee, give grace of repentance to all bloodthirsty people. But if they will not repent, O Lord, confound all their devices, defeat and frustrate all their designs and endeavours,

upon them which are or shall be contrary to the glory of thy great name, the truth and sincerity of religion, the establishment of the King and his posterity after him in their just rights and privileges, the honour and conservation of Parliaments in their just power, the preservation of this poor Church in her truth, peace, and patrimony, and the settlement of this distracted and distressed people, under their ancient laws, and in their native liberty. And when Thou hast done all this in mere mercy to them, O Lord, fill their hearts with thankfulness, and with religious, dutiful obedience to Thee and thy commandments all their days. Amen, Lord Jesus, Amen. And receive my soul into thy bosom! Amen. Our Father which art in heaven!"

He pronounced this awful prayer with a firm and audible voice, and giving the paper to Dr Stern, who had been permitted to attend him, desired him to communicate it to his other chaplains, that they might see in what manner he left this world; and he prayed God to bless them. Observing also, that a person had been writing his speech, he desired him not to do him wrong, by publishing a false and imperfect copy. His countenance had all this while a ruddier and more animated hue than it was wont to have; so that his enemies, with that malignity which marked all their proceedings towards him, said he had painted it, to fortify his cheeks against discovery of fear. The scaffold was crowded with people, and when he moved toward the block, he desired he might have room to die, beseeching them to let him have an end of his misery, which he had endured very long; and this he did as calmly "as if he rather had been taking order for a nobleman's funeral, than making way for his own!" Being come near it, he put off his doublet, and said, "God's will be done! I am willing to go out of this world; none can be more willing to send me." And seeing through the chinks of the boards that some persons were got under the scaffold about the very place where the block was seated, he called to the officer either to remove them, or stop the crevices, saying it was no part of his desire that his blood should fall upon the heads of the people. "Never," says Heylyn, "did man put off mortality with a better courage, nor look upon his bloody and malicious enemies with more Christian charity." Sir J. Clotworthy now molested him with impertinent questions, and after meekly answering him once or twice, Laud turned to the executioner as the gentler person, and giving him money, said, without the slightest change of countenance, "Here, honest friend, God forgive thee, and I do: and do thy office upon me

with mercy." Then he knelt down, and after a short prayer, laid his head upon the block, and gave the signal in these words, "Lord, receive my soul!" The head was severed at one blow; and instantly the face became pale as ashes, to the confusion of those who affirmed that he had painted it. Yet they had then the stupidity and the baseness to assert that he had reddened his countenance, and propped up his spirit, by some compounded cordial from an apothecary; so hard is the heart, and so impenetrable the understanding, of the factious.

Great multitudes attended this victim of Sectarian persecution to the grave; the greater part attracted by curiosity, but many by love and veneration; and not a few, it is believed, by remorse of conscience, for having joined in the wicked and brutish clamour with which he had been hunted down. A baser triumph never was obtained by faction, nor was any triumph ever more basely celebrated. Even after this murder had been committed with all the mockery of law, his memory was assailed in libels of blacker virulence (if that be possible) than those by which the deluded populace had been instigated to cry out for his blood; and to this day those who have inherited the opinions of the Puritans, repeat with unabashed effrontery the imputations against him, as if they had succeeded to their implacable temper,* and their hardihood of slander also. More grateful is it to observe how little is in the power of malice, even when in the dispensations of Providence it is permitted to do its worst. The enemies of Laud cut off from him, at the utmost, a few short years of infirmity and pain; and this was all they could do! They removed him from the sight of calamities, which would have been to him tenfold more grievous than death; and they afforded him an opportunity of displaying at his trial on the scaffold, as in a public theatre, a presence of mind, a strength of intellect, a calm and composed temper, an heroic and saintly magnanimity, which he could never have been known to possess, if he had not thus been put to the proof. Had they contented themselves with stripping him of his rank and fortune, and letting him go to the grave a poor and broken-hearted old man, their calumnies might then have proved so effectual, that he would have been more noted now for his infirmities than for his great and eminent virtues. But they tried him in the burning fiery furnace of affliction, and so his sterling worth was assayed and proved. And the martyrdom of Cranmer is not more inex-

* For proof of this the reader is referred to the *Quarterly Review*, vol. x. pp. 99-101.

piably disgraceful to the Papists, than that of Laud to the Puritan persecutors.

He was buried according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England; a circumstance which afforded a deep, but mournful consolation to those who revered and loved him. It seemed to them as if the venerable establishment itself over which he had presided, and for defending which he had died a martyr, were buried with him: for on the same day that six infamous peers passed the ordinance of attainder against him, they passed an act also, by which the Liturgy was suppressed,* and a Directory for public worship set forth in its stead. This miserable tract, whereby the public worship of these kingdoms was thenceforth to be regulated, is, as the title implies, a mere directory, which prescribed only the order of the service, leaving everything else to the discretion of the minister. He was to begin with prayer, in his own form of words, then to read any portion of Scripture which pleased him, so it were not from the Apocrypha, and as much as he chose, and to expound it if he thought good, having regard, however, to time, that enough might be left for other parts of the service, and that this might not be rendered tedious; psalm-singing was to follow, then a prayer before sermon, for which prefatory prayer, five pages of directions were given; the "preaching of the word" followed, then a prayer after sermon, another psalm to be sung, and lastly, a valediction.

The people at the Communion were orderly to sit about the table. It was declared requisite that on the Sabbath there should be a holy cessation all the day from all unnecessary labours, and an abstaining not only from all sports and pastimes, but also from all worldly words and thoughts; that the diet on that day should be so ordered, as that neither servants should be unnecessarily detained from public worship, nor any other persons hindered from sanctifying the day; that the time between and after the service be spent in reading, meditation, repetition of sermons (and especially by calling their families to an account of what they had heard), and catechising; holy conferences, prayer for a blessing upon the public ordinances, psalm-singing, visiting the sick, relieving the poor, and such-like duties of piety, charity, and mercy.

Burials were to be without any religious ceremony, such usages having been abused to superstition, being in no way beneficial to the dead, and many ways hurtful to the living. Nevertheless,

* Rushworth, part iii. vol. ii. p. 389.

it was judged very convenient that the Christian friends who accompanied the dead to the place appointed for public burial, should apply themselves to meditation and conferences suitable to the occasion ; and the minister, if he were present, might put them in remembrance of their duty there as upon any other opportunity. They did not intend to deny any civil respects or differences, at the burial, suitable to the rank and condition of the deceased.

Every one who could read was to have a psalm-book, and all were to be exhorted to learn reading, that the whole congregation might join in psalmody. But for the present, when many could not read, it was convenient that the minister or some other fit person should read the psalm, line by line, before the singing thereof. All holy-days were abolished, as having no warrant from the Word of God. And no directions were given for introducing either the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, or the Commandments.

Such was the Directory, which the Assembly of Divines prepared, and which a Parliament, usurping to itself the whole power of the state, ordered to be observed ; and for this meagre, miserable substitution the Liturgy was to be laid aside ! The hatred which the Puritans expressed against the Liturgy was as violent as it was unreasonable, for it must be remembered that none of them, as yet, differed in any single point from its doctrines. They called it, by a wretched play upon the word, the *Lethargy** of worship. To prescribe a form, they said, was stopping the course of God's Spirit, and muzzling† the mouth of prayer. They reviled it as a compilation made by men who were "belching‡ the sour crudities of yesterday's Popery ;" and they declared that it had brought the land generally to "Atheism."

It soon, indeed, became apparent, that these blind leaders of the blind had themselves prepared the way for every species of impiety and extravagance. They had raised a storm whereby the peace and happiness of three kingdoms were destroyed, because they would not kneel at the communion, tolerate the surplice, use the finest liturgy that ever was composed, nor bow at the name of Jesus ! They had raised the storm, and by them it was kept up ; for the King had now yielded every political point in dispute, and nothing but the intolerance of the Puritans prevented an accommodation. And here it is observable, that, as

* Anatomy of the Service Book, p. 7.

† Christ on his Throne, p. 30.

‡ Of Reformation, touching Church

Discipline in England, p. 16. "Trial of the Liturgy," p. 7.

their factious scrupulosity brought on a civil war, which real grievances alone would not have provoked, and thus preserved the nation from that arbitrary government, under which it might probably have settled; so their intolerant bigotry averted a settlement, which, by stripping the King of his legitimate power, would in its consequences have been hardly less injurious; and thus, through a severe process of evil, good was ultimately educed from their gross inconsistencies, their preposterous errors, and their manifold and enormous crimes.

They had succeeded in subverting that goodly fabric of Church government which had been established at the Reformation. It was now to be seen how their system would answer in its stead, and how that system would be observed when they themselves had destroyed the principle of obedience. The Assembly set forth a confession of faith, wherein the Calvinistic opinions were asserted in all their rigour; and this the Parliament approved. They drew up also a scheme of Presbyterian government, which was approved and established in Scotland, but for which they could not obtain the sanction of the English Parliament. London, with its suburbs, however, was organised upon the Presbyterian plan; and it is to be wished that parts of this discipline, particularly its parochial polity, had been carried into effect, and retained at the Restoration, as being well compatible with an Episcopal Church, and tending greatly to its efficiency and support. But even in the Assembly, convened as it had been under their own direction, the Presbyterians were opposed by two parties, differing widely from each other, but uniting now against a sect as intolerant, when it had obtained power, as it had heretofore been impatient of conformity. The Erastians were the one, who, regarding the Church as a part of the state, and properly subservient to it, were for allowing no coercive power to the clergy. The most learned of the members held these opinions, and they were also well supported in the House of Commons. The Independents were not so numerous in the Assembly, and the ablest of their representatives was now becoming obnoxious for embracing and defending the Arminian doctrine; but they were strong in the principle of toleration, which they professed though they did not always practise, they were acquiring an ascendancy in the state, and the sword was in their hands.

These parties had each a clear and intelligible principle. The Erastians might prefer one form of ecclesiastical government to another, but could consistently and conscientiously conform to

any, from which they did not differ in points of doctrine. The scheme of the Independents was methodical, practical, and efficient, though liable to more objections than the Presbyterian platform, as that is far inferior to the Episcopal form, even if the question were considered prospectively alone, in its mere political bearings. But besides these there were others "higher flown * and more seraphical;" a rabble of sectaries started up, so many and so various, that names for half of them have not been found in the nomenclature of heresy. "Strange monsters," the Presbyterians called them, "having their heads of Enthusiasm, their bodies of Antinomianism, their thighs of Familism, their legs and feet of Anabaptism, their hands of Arminianism, and † Libertinism is the great vein running through the whole." Thus they who had broken down the fences complained, when they saw what a herd of unclean beasts followed them into the vineyard. "We have the plague of Egypt upon us," ‡ said they, "frogs out of the bottomless pit covering our land, coming into our houses, bed-chambers, beds, churches: a man can hardly come into any place but some croaking frog or other will be coming up upon him." And they who had plunged these kingdoms into civil war, rather than submit to a hierarchy which required from its ministers nothing more than the due observance of its decent forms, cried out against toleration, now that they had set up an establishment of their own, as "the grand design of the Devil, the most transcendent, catholic, and fundamental of all evils, the Abaddon, the Apollyon, the abomination of desolation and astonishment."

For a while the rod was in their hands, and they made its iron weight be felt. These men, who had pleaded conscience about a gesture and a garment, prohibited the use of the Common Prayer, not merely in churches, chapels, and places of public worship, but in any private place or family as well, under penalty of five pounds for the first offence, ten for the second, and for the third a year's imprisonment. And whoever should preach, write, or print anything in derogation of the Directory, was to forfeit, for the use of the poor, a sum not less than five pounds, nor exceeding § fifty. They voted in the Assembly, that the power of the keys was in the officers of the Church, whereby they could retain or remit sins, shut the kingdom of heaven and open it, and this, with the power of excommunication, they voted to be theirs by Divine right. But though the Parliament assented to this claim

* Edwards.

† Edwards's *Gangræna*, p. 16.

‡ Ibid. p. 121.

§ Ordinance, 23d Aug. 1645.

of power, they frustrated its purport by providing an appeal to itself, and reserving to the magistrate the cognisance of all capital offences. The Assembly ventured to petition against this on the ground of the Divine right, and in better reliance upon the Scotch, who were disposed with their whole force to assist them in their preposterous pretensions. They were alarmed when the committee of the House of Commons, to which their petition was referred, reported that they were guilty of a pre-munire; and they found afterwards that in relying upon the Scotch they leaned upon a broken reed.

But when the King, after the total wreck of his cause, had taken shelter with the Scotch army, the Presbyterians would gladly have obtained the sanction of his authority, which would have enabled them to trample upon the Independents, and they would have set up again the throne which they had subverted, if they could have set up their own Right Divine with it. The terms which they proposed indicated the implacableness of their political hatred, and the extent of their religious intolerance. They excepted from a general pardon above threescore persons by name, besides whole classes of men, in terms so general that scarcely any one who had served the King could feel himself secure. They required severer measures against the Romanists, and demanded that an act should be passed for educating the children of Papists by Protestants in the Protestant religion. They insisted upon the utter abolishment of Episcopacy, and that the King should take the Covenant himself, and impose it upon all in the three kingdoms. This most unfortunate and most calumniated Prince is charged with insincerity, because he hesitated and wavered in circumstances where he had only a choice of evils. But though by nature infirm of purpose, few men have ever been more nobly and religiously fixed in principle: not only at this time, but when the Scotch had sold him to his enemies, he might, to all human appearance, have preserved himself, if he would have sacrificed the Church. They who accuse Charles of seeking to bring back the Romish superstition, and of systematic duplicity, perceive not how, in recording this acknowledged fact, they thoroughly disprove their own slanderous accusation. Pressed as he was by foes who held him in captivity, and beset by weak or treacherous friends, he continued firm upon this great point. The Queen, who had always been an unfortunate adviser, and too often an evil one, urged him to give up the Church; for this would have been as much a subject of triumph to the Romanists as to the Sectarians. But

Charles was not to be shaken; he rested upon his coronation oath, and upon his own deliberate and well-grounded conviction that Episcopacy was the form of Church government which had been handed down to us from the Apostles. To those who pressed him with arguments, he answered with sound learning, sound judgment, and the strength of truth; and to his ill-advising friends he replied that his conscience was dearer to him than his crown. To this determination he adhered in the extremity of his fortune.

The Puritans, unable to obtain the King's consent, proceeded in this, as they had done in so many other acts of iniquity, upon their own usurped authority. They had already abolished Episcopal jurisdiction, they now abolished the rank and order, and confiscated all their rights and possessions. The spoils they shared among themselves and their adherents, by lavish grants, or such sales as were little more than nominal. Sir Arthur Hazlerigg secured so large a portion that he was called the Bishop of Durham. Dr Cornelius Burgess also, one of the most active of the Puritan divines in kindling the rebellion, became a large purchaser, though he had formerly maintained that it was utterly unlawful to convert such endowments to any private persons' profit. Loudly, indeed, as the Puritanical clergy had declaimed against the wealth and power of the Bishops, they had shewn themselves far from indifferent to either when they had brought them within their reach. "Setting sail to all winds that might blow gain into their covetous bosoms," they took all they could get, not scrupling to hold at the same time master-ships in the University, lectureships in the city, and one, two, or more, of the best livings from which the lawful incumbents had been turned out with their families to starve, if they could not obtain their fifths from these hard-hearted intruders. Nor had the Bishops ever claimed half the power in spiritual or temporal affairs, which these men exercised. The temper of the Episcopal Church had become wisely tolerant. It required conformity from its ministers, but carried on no war against the consciences of men; the clamour which had been raised with most effect against the hierarchy was for not exerting the rigour of the law against the Papists. The Puritans meddled with everything. They abolished Maypoles, and they prohibited servants and children from walking in the fields on the Sabbath day. They appointed the second Tuesday in every month for reasonable recreation, all holy-days having been suppressed; and they passed an ordinance by which eight heresies were made

punishable with death upon the first offence, unless the offender abjured his errors, and irremissibly if he relapsed. Sixteen other opinions were to be punished with imprisonment, till the offender should find sureties that he would maintain them no more. Among these were the belief in Purgatory ; the opinion that God might be worshipped in pictures or images, free will, universal restitution, and the sleep of the soul. Their laws also for the suppression of immorality were written in blood.

Such edicts were of no avail ; the men who enacted them had destroyed the principle and habit of obedience. In the course of unerring retribution, the prime movers of the rebellion were thrust from their abused station by men more audacious and more consistent in guilt. After the murder of the King change followed change, but no change brought stability to the state, or repose to the nation, not even when the supreme and absolute authority was usurped by a man, who, of all others, was the most worthy to have exercised it, had it lawfully devolved upon him. Cromwell relieved the country from Presbyterian intolerance ; and he curbed those fanatics who were for proclaiming King Jesus, that, as His saints, they might divide the land amongst themselves. But it required all his strength to do this, and to keep down the spirit of political and religious fanaticism, when his own mind, by its constitutional strength, had shaken off both diseases. He then saw and understood the beauty, and the utility, and the necessity of those establishments, civil and ecclesiastical, over the ruins of which he had made his way to power ; and gladly would he have restored the Monarchy and the Episcopal Church. But he was deterred from the only practicable course less by the danger of the attempt, than by the guilty part which he had borne in the King's fate ; and at the time when Europe regarded him with terror and admiration as the ablest and most powerful potentate of the age, he was paying the bitter penalty of successful ambition, consumed by cares and anxieties and secret fears, and only preserved from all the horrors of remorse by the spiritual drams which were administered to him as long as he had life.

Eighteen months of anarchy after Cromwell's death made the nation impatient of its oppressors, and indignant at its long sufferings. Even the men who had been most instrumental in bringing on its misery and degradation were brought to their senses. The national wish was felt and obeyed at a time when no one dared utter it ; and Charles II. was invited unconditionally from exile to his paternal throne, by a people who desired

nothing more than the restoration of those institutions under which England had been prosperous and happy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHARLES II.—JAMES II.—THE REVOLUTION.

WHEN Charles I. was in the hands of his enemies, and had reason to apprehend that he should never be delivered from them, he addressed a paper of advice to his son, and thus exhorted him concerning that Church which had deserved, and requited with such true loyalty, his sincere and dutiful attachment :—"If you never see my face again, and God will have me buried in such a barbarous imprisonment and obscurity wherein few hearts that love me are permitted to exchange a word or a look with me, I do require and entreat you, as your Father and your King, that you never suffer your heart to receive the least check against, or disaffection from, the true Religion established in the Church of England. I tell you I have tried it, and after much search and many disputes, have concluded it to be the best in the world, not only in the community as Christian, but also in the special notion as Reformed ; keeping the middle way between the pomp of superstitious tyranny, and the meanness of fantastic anarchy. . . . Not but that, the draught being excellent as to the main, both for doctrine and government in the Church of England, some lines, as in very good figures, may haply need some correcting and polishing ; which might here easily have been done by a safe and gentle hand, if some men's precipitancy had not violently demanded such rude alterations as would have quite destroyed all the beauty and proportions of the whole. . . . The scandal of the late troubles, which some may object and urge to you against the Protestant Religion established in England, is easily answered to them or your own thoughts in this, that scarce any one who hath been a beginner or an active persecutor of this late war against the Church, the laws, and me, either was or is a true lover, embracer, or practiser of the Protestant Religion established in England, which neither gives such rules, nor ever before set such examples."

Then after some political advice in a strain of wise and magnanimous piety, the captive King concluded in these affecting words :—"In sum, what good I intended, do you perform when

God shall give you power. Much good I have offered, more I purposed to Church and State, if times had been capable of it. . . . Happy times, I hope, attend you, wherein your subjects, by their miseries, will have learnt, that Religion to their God, and Loyalty to their King, cannot be parted without both their sin and their infelicity. I pray God bless you and establish your kingdom in righteousness, your soul in true religion, and your honour in the love of God and your people. And if God will have disloyalty perfected by my destruction, let my memory ever, with my name, live in you, as of your Father that loves you, and once a King of three flourishing kingdoms, whom God thought fit to honour not only with the sceptre and government of them, but also with the suffering many indignities and an untimely death for them, while I studied to preserve the rights of the Church, the power of the Laws, the honour of my Crown, the privilege of Parliament, the liberties of my People, and my own Conscience, which, thank God, is dearer to me than a thousand kingdoms. I know God can, I hope He yet will, restore me to my rights. I cannot despair either of His mercy, or of my People's love and pity. At worst, I trust I shall but go before you to a better kingdom which God hath prepared for me, and me for it, through my Saviour Jesus Christ, to whose mercies I commend you and all mine. Farewell, till we meet, if not on earth, yet in Heaven."

The late King had also left in the care of one of his chaplains, afterwards Archbishop Sheldon, a written vow, that if it should please God to re-establish him on his throne, he would wholly give back to the Church all those impropriations which were held by the Crown; and what crown-lands soever had been taken from any see, collegiate church, or other religious foundation, he would hold hereafter from the Church, under such reasonable fines and rents as should be set by conscientious persons appointed to that trust.

Such had been the intentions of the murdered King concerning the Church; and the feelings of the nation were as unequivocally understood: they desired the re-establishment of that Church for which Cranmer had died at the stake, and Laud on the scaffold: and this, indeed, was known to be the natural and sure consequence of Charles's restoration. But it was impossible to remedy the evil which twenty years of religious anarchy had produced. A fair promise, however, was held forth in the King's Declaration from Breda, that the most conciliatory measures should be pursued. It was there said, "Because the pas-

sions and uncharitableness of the times have produced several opinions in religion, by which men are engaged in parties and animosities against each other, which, when they shall hereafter unite in a freedom of conversation will be composed, or better understood; we do declare a liberty to tender consciences; and that no man shall be disquieted, or called in question, for differences of opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom; and that we shall be ready to consent to such an Act of Parliament, as upon mature deliberation shall be offered to us, for the full granting that indulgence."

As Charles granted, in its full extent, the indemnity which was offered in this declaration, so it may be affirmed that he was sincere in promising liberty of conscience. The promise was not kept; for Parliament* did not think proper to prepare such an Act, and all parties were in a temper the most unfavourable for the design, the King being, perhaps, the only person who was sincerely disposed to it. This disposition did not proceed in him wholly from looseness of opinion, nor from that easiness of temper which, though akin to virtue, is so easily made subservient to vice. It arose from a just and honourable sentiment of shame that laws so severe as those against the Romanists should continue to exist, after the political necessity for them had ceased. If any favourable inclination toward their system of belief had at that time begun to influence him, it did not appear in his conduct; nor does it seem to have been anything more than he naturally felt as one whose mother, most unfortunately for these kingdoms, was a Papist. The liberty of conscience which he desired for them, he would have allowed to all; but by a singular infelicity of circumstances there never was a time when such tremendous objections existed to this desirable toleration. The Puritans, who sought it for themselves, would not allow it to the Papists; and indeed it was evident to all reasonable men that each of these parties required it only as a step to something more. There had arisen a general and well founded apprehension that the Romanists were becoming dangerous to the State. It was believed that the late troubles had been insidiously fomented by Romish agents with a view of promoting the Romish cause: it was certain that they had profited by them, and made more converts than in any former† generation; among these were many persons of great note and influence, and more than had yet avowed themselves were suspected. It had been reported during the King's exile, that he

* Clarendon's Life, vol. ii. p. 296.

† Sir P. Warwick, p. 84.

and his brothers had changed their religion; the motives for raising the report were palpable; but there was too much ground for apprehending that such a perversion was far from improbable, and with a Popish king, or a Popish heir-presumptive, it was certain that there could be no safety for the Protestant Church.

The Papists, however, soon, by their own imprudence, relieved Charles from any perplexity on their score. They could not agree among themselves: they reviled* the Marian martyrs in a strain which evinced how willingly they would have commenced another such persecution had the power been in their hands; and they provoked the ministry to remember that they had slighted the King in his† exile, and had treated with Cromwell for taking an oath of submission to his government as the price of that indulgence, which he, in his true spirit of toleration, was willing to have granted. The point was still to be settled with the Puritans, and with them it appeared that before the question of toleration was considered, that of power was to be decided. The Presbyterians, who were the most numerous and best organised party, made a skilful attempt, when they declared for the restoration of the monarchy, to establish that "pattern in the mount," for the sake of which they had commenced the work of its destruction. They had a majority in the House of Commons, and formed a Committee of Religion before the King's return, meaning to present for his sanction a plan of Church government conformable to their principles; but notwithstanding all the precautions which they had taken to manage the elections, many members faithful to the legitimate Establishment were returned, who frustrated their project by impeding it, till the first adjournment of the House, when the King told them that as they had offered him no advice towards composing the differences in religion, he would try what he could do in it himself.

The national feeling had already been manifested. At the moment when the cannon announced the King's peaceful return to the palace of his fathers, some of the sequestered bishops,‡ and other clergy, performed a service of thanksgiving, in Henry the Seventh's chapel, with feelings such as no other service of joy can ever have excited. In most parts of the country, where the minister was well disposed, a repeal of the laws against the

* Harleian Miscel. vol. vii. p. 262, 8vo edition.

† Clarendon's Life, vol. ii. p. 272.

‡ England's Joy. Somers' Tracts, vol. vii. p. 422.

Liturgy was not waited for, so certain was it held, by every sound old English heart, that the constitution of their fathers, in Church, as well as in State, was now to be restored. The Presbyterians felt this; but when they saw how impossible it was to obtain a real triumph, they sought for such a compromise as might be made to bear the semblance of one. Their hope now was, that the Church would give up some of its ceremonies, and alter its Liturgy to their liking. But in aiming at this, their leaders proceeded with a bad faith, which, when it was detected, abated both the hope and the wish of conciliating them.

After a conference between some of the London ministers, who were the heads of the Presbyterian party, and an equal number of the loyal and long sequestered clergy, the King published a Declaration, stating that he had commanded the clergy on both sides to meet, and agree, if possible, upon an Act of Uniformity, which might be confirmed in Parliament. In the meantime, he signified his pleasure, that both should be at liberty, the one to use the Liturgy, the surplice, and the sign of the cross; the other, to follow their own custom. The draught of this Declaration was shewn to the London ministers, before it was promulgated; it then contained a clause in which the King declared his own constant practice of the Common Prayer, and said he should take it well from those who used it in their Churches, that the people might be again acquainted with the piety, gravity, and devotion of it, and that their living in good neighbourhood might thus be facilitated. After some days' consideration, some of the ministers, and Calamy among them, who was one of the most active and influential of that party, came, deputed by the rest, to the Chancellor, Lord Clarendon, and requested that this clause might be omitted, saying, they desired it for the King's own end, and that they might the better shew their obedience and resolution to serve him. They would first reconcile the people, they said, who for near twenty years had not been acquainted with that form. They would inform them that it contained much piety and devotion, and might lawfully be used; they would then begin to use it themselves, and by degrees accustom the people to it. And this would have a better effect than if the clause were published; for they should then be thought, in their persuasions, to act not from conscience and duty, but for the sake of complying with the King's wish, and meriting his favour; and they feared other ill consequences from the waywardness of the common people, who required management, and were not to be brought round at once.

Clarendon believed them, and in their presence repeated to the King what they had represented. They again protested that their sole object was to promote the King's end; Charles also gave them credit for sincerity, and the clause was left out. The people were generally satisfied with the Declaration; but it was soon perceived that the Puritanical clergy were not, and that their emissaries were employed in exciting discontent. Their letters were intercepted; and among many of a like tendency was one from Calamy himself, to a leading minister in Somersetshire, entreating that he and his friends would persist in the use of the Directory, and by no means admit the Common Prayer in their Churches; for he made no question but that they should prevail further with the King than he had consented to in that * Declaration. This proof of knavery in the leaders was followed by an instance of sufficient effrontery to defeat its own purpose, the days of mob petitioning being over. A petition was presented in the name of the London ministers, and many others of the same opinion, thanking the King for his Declaration, and saying they received it as an earnest of his future goodness, in granting all those other concessions which were absolutely necessary for the liberty of their consciences; and they prayed that the wearing the surplice, and the use of the cross in baptism, might be absolutely abolished, as being scandalous to all men of tender consciences. The names of those persons who had attended at the conference, and requested the King to withdraw the clause, were not affixed to the petition; but it came signed by those who had deputed † them; and after these proofs of effrontery and bad faith it was plain that nothing could be effected with such persons by conciliatory means.

Conciliation, however, was still tried; and after the vacant sees had been filled up, and the Act repealed which excluded the bishops from Parliament, the bishops were required to make such alterations in the Book of Common Prayer as they thought would make it more ‡ acceptable to the "Dissenting brethren," and such additions as the temper of the present times and the past calamities required. Neither the good nor the evil, which were predicted from this measure, ensued. The alterations did not conciliate a party whom nothing could have conciliated; nor did they afford a plea for representing that the Church had in any respect changed its tenets or its ceremonies, or admitted that they stood in need of reform. Long conferences took place between the bishops and the most eminent of the Presbyterian

* Clarendon's Life, vol. ii. p. 141-2, third ed. † Ibid. p. 142. ‡ Ibid. p. 273.

clergy, of whom Baxter, Reynolds, and Calamy were the most conspicuous. The former offered, on the part of his brethren, a Liturgy which they had authorised him to compile; and presented their exceptions to that of the Church: it is even pitiful to see how captious and utterly frivolous are the greater part; the very few to which any weight might have been assigned, lost all their force from being mingled with such empty cavillings. And the conference ended in shewing how hopeless it was that anything like union could be effected.

It is obvious that no possible comprehension, consistent with the existence of the Establishment, could have taken in any other class of Nonconformists than the Presbyterians. The Independents, and a host of other sectaries in their endless varieties, must necessarily have been excluded. The same difficulty was found in the way of a general toleration; for there were few of these sects who did not hold opinions which in the judgment of the others were intolerable; and there were some whose madness it was impossible to tolerate. The Levellers, and the Fifth Monarchy men, had been formidable enough to disquiet Cromwell; and they were fanatical enough for any attempt, however desperate or atrocious. A band of these madmen sallied from their meeting-house, proclaimed King Jesus in the streets of London, killed some twenty men, and lost as many themselves, before they could be secured. This explosion, the discovery of some treasons, and the report of more, operated grievously against the whole body of Dissenters. It was not sufficiently considered how widely the great majority of them differed in opinion from these rabid enthusiasts, because it was known that the principle of discontent was common to them all, and that discontent passes easily into disaffection. The general feeling therefore was against any compromise with men to whom the nation imputed all its long calamities; and Charles did not think himself bound by his Declaration from Breda to anything more upon the subject of religion, than to pass such an Act as the Parliament might think proper to offer. A new Parliament had been called, and under circumstances in which the public feeling could be fairly represented. The Liturgy as approved by the Convocation, and confirmed by the King under the Great Seal, was presented to it, and received; and an Act of Uniformity passed,* with some clauses which the wisest statesmen and truest friends of the Church disapproved, but were unable to prevent. One of these excluded all persons from the ministry who had not received Episcopal

* Clarendon's Life, vol. ii. p. 302, 295.

ordination; . . . all therefore who had received Presbyterian orders were to quit their benefices, or submit to be re-ordained. Another required a subscription from every man about to receive any preferment in the Universities or the Church, declaring his assent and consent to everything in the Book of Common Prayer, . . . words which gave occasion to * cavils of the same kind as had been raised against the *et cetera* oath. But the touchstone was a clause which the Commons introduced, for another qualifying subscription, wherein the subscriber declared it was not lawful upon any pretence to take arms against the King; abhorred the traitorous position of taking arms, by his authority, against his person; and renounced the Covenant as imposing no obligation upon him or any others, and unlawful in itself. Any clergyman who should not fully conform to this Act by St Bartholomew's day, which was about three months after it was published, was *ipso facto*, to be deprived of his cure; and the Act was so worded as not to leave it in the King's power to dispense with its observance.

It was rigorously enforced, and about two thousand † ministers were deprived. The measure was complained of, as an act of enormous cruelty and persecution; and the circumstance of its being fixed for St Bartholomew's day, gave the complainants occasion to compare it with the atrocious deed committed upon that day against the Huguenots in France. They were careful not to remember that the same ‡ day, and for the same reason (because the tithes were commonly due at Michaelmas), had been appointed for the former ejection, when four times as many of the loyal clergy were deprived, for fidelity to their sovereign. No small proportion of the present sufferers had obtained their preferment by means of that tyrannical deprivation: they did but drink now of the cup which they had administered to others. Not a few had been deeply implicated in the guilt of the rebellion. But this ill consequence was sure to follow from a measure, not otherwise impolitic, and fully justified by the circumstances of the times, that while for the pride of consistency, and for conscientious scruples, some men of genuine piety and exemplary worth, were expelled from a Church in the service of which they were worthy to have held a distinguished rank; others retained their benefices, who would have been a reproach to any Church, and to whom it was matter of indifference what they subscribed,

* Clarendon's Life, vol. ii. p. 290.

† This is their own statement. "As to your account of about 2000 silenced ministers," says Sir Roger L'Estrange,

"a matter of eight or nine hundred difference shall break no squares betwixt you and me."—*Dialogue between Richard and Baxter*, p. 7. ‡ Walker, p. 28.

and whether they took the Covenant or renounced it. Reynolds was among the better and wiser minds who conformed; he accepted the see of Norwich. That of Hereford was refused by Baxter, and that of Lichfield by Calamy; how strongly the latter was attached to his party is proved, by the dishonourable manner in which he attempted to promote its cause; the stronger intellect and more ingenuous temper of the former were clouded by old prejudices, petty scruples, and the perpetual sense of bodily infirmities, which made his protracted life little better than one long disease.

The Nonconformists, having so recently been masters, could not easily be convinced that they were a very small and a very odious minority. They expected that the display of their numbers would make the Government feel it necessary to conciliate them by some concessions, and that there would be a difficulty in supplying the pulpits from which they were excluded. Being disappointed in both expectations, they deliberated whether it was not expedient for them to follow the example of their predecessors, and shaking the dust of England from their feet, migrate into Holland, or into the American colonies, where their brethren were established, and the first difficulties of colonisation had been overcome. If the Government had been conducted upon any settled and steady system of sound policy, it would have encouraged them in this intention, and afforded them every possible facility and aid for their voluntary removal. But on the part of the Court there was neither wisdom nor sincerity. Lord Clarendon, the wisest, because the most upright of all statesmen, was counteracted in his views, by dark intrigues and selfish interests. And a course of apparent inconsistency was pursued, the secret object of which was, by sometimes harassing the Nonconformists, and sometimes raising their hopes, to keep up their state of excitement, and hold them together as a party; till through their means a toleration, which should include the Papists, might be brought about, and a way prepared for the re-establishment of Popery in the plenitude of its power, its intolerance, and its abominations.

The King, whether at that time he understood or not the end which was proposed, was prevailed upon therefore to set forth a Declaration, wherein his own disapproval of any severities on the score of religion was expressed, and a hope held out that the laws upon that matter would be amended to the satisfaction of all his subjects. This gave new spirits to the Nonconformists, as it was designed to do. But however much they might desire

indulgence for themselves, they could not yet be brought to think it lawful or tolerable that any should be granted to the Papists; and the general feeling of the country was equally against both; if there was any difference, it was that the Romanists were regarded with the more fear, the Puritans with the more abhorrence. There was undoubted danger from both; that from the Papists was the greatest, but it was the most remote. They had not only the fixed design, but the steady hope and prospect of setting up again the Papal authority in England: a scheme which the conversion of the Duke of York, and the indifference, if not the inclinations of the King, appeared to render feasible; which the multiplicity of schisms induced by the rebellion, favoured; and in the pursuit of which they could rely upon the secret aid of all Popish powers, and the open assistance of France, if ever it should be required. The danger from the Puritans was not of any far-sighted and long-concerted policy; but of some execrable plot, or insane insurrection, which a few desperate fanatics might be frantic enough to plan and execute, without the knowledge of their fellow sectaries, but in reliance upon the principle of disaffection, which was common to them all. Government was fully aware that such plots were carrying on, and it was deemed a necessary measure of precaution to exact an oath from the sequestered ministers, declaring that it was not lawful, on any pretence, to take arms against the King, or any commissioned by him; and that they would not at any time endeavour an alteration in the government of the Church or State. They who refused to make this declaration were not to come within five miles of any city or borough, or of the church which they had been accustomed to serve.

The Five Mile Act, as it is called, was impolitic, because it brought into discussion the question of resistance, . . . a question which, it has been well said, subjects ought never to remember, and rulers never to forget; and it was injurious, because it required a declaration concerning Church government, which it was quite certain that no Dissenter could conscientiously take. But this objectionable clause afforded a just and welcome reason for refusing the oath, to those who might otherwise have thought it expedient to swallow the political part and digest it as they could. The more severe the measure, the better it accorded with the public feeling; and the occurrences of those times were such as to justify as well as quicken the apprehensions and the jealousy of the Government; for the remains of the republican

party were seeking to take advantage of the Dutch war, and once more throw the kingdom into confusion and anarchy, that they might again try the experiment of their beloved commonwealth. Algernon Sidney was soliciting for this purpose money from * France, and men from Holland; consultations had been held with † Ludlow concerning the enterprise; and there were enough of Cromwell's ‡ officers ready to set their lives upon the hazard. A conspiracy was detected, for which eight persons were convicted. They had all been officers and soldiers in the rebellion, all were Levellers, and they confessed at their execution, that there was an intention of setting London on fire, on the 2d of September, that being found by Lilly's Almanack, and a scheme erected for that purpose, to be a lucky day, a planet then ruling which prognosticated the downfall of monarchy. The men were executed in April; their confession was published in the Gazette at the time; and on the day which they had specified, the fire § of London broke out. If this were mere coincidence, it is surely the most remarkable in history.

The people, nevertheless, were persuaded that London had been burnt by the Papists, and the public authorities partook or assented to their credulity. The odium which this senseless calumny raised, was kept up by men of great talents, and consummate profligacy, who, from having been the wickedest ministers, became the wickedest opposition that ever dishonoured this kingdom. The infamous affair of the Popish plot carried it to its height, but the subsequent re-action had well nigh brought about the triumph of the Romish cause. Never were the civil and religious liberties of England in greater danger than when an opposition which had so lately directed the multitude at its will, and whose object it had been, by means of popular delusion, in every possible way to annoy the King, and embarrass the Government (not without a hope of overthrowing both), found themselves at once as devoid of support and strength, as they were of character and principle, and saw the whole authority of the State delivered over as it were by acclamation into the King's hands. Everything then seemed to conspire in favour of the Romanists. And when Charles terminated his dissolute life and disgraceful reign in the communion of the Romish

* *Ceuvres de Louis XIV.* t. ii. p. 204.

† Ludlow, vol. iii. pp. 151-6. Edinburgh, 1751. Ludlow's passport from the Comte d'Estrades, sent him that he might go from Switzerland to Paris to confer there with Sidney upon this project, is printed in the same volume, p. 157.

‡ Clarendon's Life, vol. ii. p. 365.

§ Burnet's Own Time, i. p. 399, ed. 1823. Kennet, quoted in Howell's State Trials, vol. vi. p. 826. Parker, Comment. pp. 81, 101. He had heard all the details of this conspiracy from Alexander, one of the parties who escaped, pp. 82-3.

Church, and his brother, who was not only an avowed but a zealous Papist, succeeded to the throne, they considered their ascendancy to be secure.

If Charles ever seriously intended to prepare the way for that ascendancy, the manner in which he disposed of the church preferment tended effectually to counteract his intentions. The clergy whom he promoted were, with few exceptions, men of the greatest ability and worth, armed at all points for controversy, munificent in bounty, powerful in preaching, exemplary in their private lives, and in the whole course of their public conduct conscientious and consistent. While they taught and believed that Government is of Divine right, and that passive obedience is the religious duty of the subject, they neither regarded the Sovereign as despotic, nor the people as slaves, knowing that their obedience was due to the laws of the land, and not to the mere will and pleasure of an arbitrary ruler. They could not be insensible to their danger from a Popish successor; and yet when the Bill of Exclusion was brought forward, and their influence as a body might have turned the scale, they adhered to the principle of constitutional loyalty, and the bishops, without one exception, voted against it. Toward the Papists and the Nonconformists, or Dissenters, as they now began to be called, their conduct was firm and dignified; they regarded the points of difference between them as essential, and therefore admitting of no compromise.

The Dissenters had always been supported by some unprincipled statesmen, who despised them while they used them as their instruments. Shaftesbury and Buckingham did then as Leicester had done in Elizabeth's days. By the encouragement which they thus received, by just so much persecution as rouses a natural and generous spirit of resistance, and by the zeal and activity which such circumstances excite, they became a recognised, and not an inconsiderable, party in the State, and that which had been an acute was converted into a chronic disease. The better part of their character appeared when it was their turn to suffer; in fact, both among ministers and people none but the better members were left, who for the sake of what they believed to be their duty, were willing to incur the danger of hopeless imprisonment. The oppression to which they had been subjected was not that which driveth wise men mad; it was such as sobered those who had run wild in the inebriety of success. The crazier sects disappeared: and lay preaching, from which so many evils had arisen, was no longer heard of, except

among the Quakers, who suffered more from the laws than all the other sects collectively, and who, laying aside their more outrageous follies, were now settling under a discipline which rendered them from the most extravagant, the most orderly of men.

The scheme of making the Dissenters instrumental to the re-establishment of Popery, was well concerted ; and, as far as concerned them, it was successful. The only reason for which they had left the Church of England was because it did not, in their opinion, depart sufficiently from the Church of Rome ; and among the offences of which they had accused Laud and Charles I., one was that the Primate had favoured certain priests who were in prison, and that the King had not ordered them to execution. The danger from Popery had then been imaginary, it was now real and imminent : they, however, stood aloof from the struggle, and left the clergy to maintain the Protestant cause from the pulpit and the press. The clergy were equal to this duty. How earnestly James was bent upon his purpose was plain from the constraint which he put upon his own feelings when he condescended to court the Dissenters, and what the consequences of his success would be, none, whose judgment was not biassed by self-interest, could possibly doubt. Even the plan of St Paul's church was altered by James's interference, and the side oratories added, in despite of Sir Christopher Wren's remonstrances, for the secret purpose of rendering it more convenient as a Roman Catholic place of worship.* The Romanists proceeded in the full assurance of success : and while addresses for a general indulgence were obtained from some of the Nonconformists, from some of the old dissenting officers and soldiers, and from a few servile corporations and companies (even the Cooks † presented one) ! what indulgence was to be expected under a Popish government was shewn by the persecution of the Protestants in France. When the French clergy thanked Louis XIV. for having rooted out heresy from his dominions in that persecution (which, regarded in all its circumstances, is the most atrocious in European history), they added that one further glory was reserved for him, that of lending his aid to reduce ‡ England into the pale of the Catholic Church.

The better to secure his end, James promoted in the Church such persons as he thought would be most pliable : the few who were found so, had been equally compliant when the Puritans

* Spence's Anecdotes, p. 298. † Somers' Tracts, vol. ix. p. 47. ‡ Ibid. p. 171.

were in power. He published directions to the Archbishops to prohibit the clergy from preaching on controversial points. To have obeyed that prohibition when the principles of the Establishment were incessantly attacked, would have been consenting to its overthrow; and they did their duty in repelling those attacks, and exposing the frauds and corruptions of the Romish Church. The King then had recourse to another method, which was likely to be more effectual. He appointed a Commission for inquiring into, and punishing ecclesiastical offences; the Commissioners being empowered to summon persons of any rank in the Church, and punish them by suspension, privation, and excommunication, "notwithstanding any laws or statutes of the realm." The Primate, and the Bishops of Durham and Rochester, were named members of this court, and there were four Lay Commissioners, of whom Jefferies was one.

Of the two bishops, one was timid, the other time-serving, and had been promoted for that qualification. But Sancroft, the Primate, was a man of sterling worth, and seventy years had not abated the vigour of his understanding, nor the strength of his heart. Having satisfied himself that the Commission was not legal, and that, even if it were otherwise, he could not legally be compelled to act in it, he declined the appointment upon the plea of his infirmities. The new Bishop of Chester was nominated in his stead, and Sancroft was in such expectation of being cited before this tribunal for declining to bear a part in it, that he prepared a protest against its jurisdiction. About this time he received a letter from the Princess of Orange, expressive of her satisfaction at hearing that the English clergy were as firm to their religion as they had always been to their King, and her confidence that God would still preserve the Church which he had provided with such able men. He told her in his reply that she had put new life into a dying old man, ready to sink under the double burthen of age and sorrow; and that such consolation never could have come more seasonably. "It hath seemed good to the Infinite Wisdom," said he, "to exercise this poor Church with trials of all sorts, and of all degrees; but the greatest calamity that ever befell us was, that it pleased God to permit wicked and ungodly men, after they had barbarously murdered the father, to drive out the sons from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, as if they had said to them, Go and serve other gods: the dreadful effects whereof we still feel every moment, but must not, nay, we cannot, particularly express. And though all this (were it yet much more) cannot in the least shake or

alter our steady loyalty to our sovereign and the royal family, in the legal succession of it, yet it embitters the very comforts that are left us, it blasts all our present joys, and makes us sit down with sorrow in dust and ashes. Blessed be God, who in so dark and dismal a night hath caused some dawn of light to break forth upon us from the eastern shore, in the constancy and good affection of your Royal Highness and the excellent Prince towards us; for if this should fail us too, which the God of heaven and earth forbid, our hearts must surely break."

The measures of the Court were such at that time as to justify the darkest forebodings. A Papist was appointed Dean of Christ Church, and the King dispensed with his taking the oaths. A noble stand against a similar nomination was made by the Fellows of Magdalen College, and though the new Court of Commission exerted its power, and expelled them, the resistance which had there been made produced a strong effect upon the nation. At Cambridge also the King was opposed with equal firmness, and when he sent his mandamus, requiring them to receive one of his priests, a Benedictine, as Master of Arts, they unanimously refused to obey. One aggression followed another; the laws had plied before the King; and if the clergy had yielded also, the civil and religious liberties of England would have been laid at his feet. But he found in them a steady and principled resistance, and when he issued an Order in Council requiring the clergy to read in all their pulpits a Declaration for Liberty of Conscience, the point was brought to an issue, and those liberties depended upon the event.

In this Declaration James suspended all penal laws on matters of religion, abolished all tests, and declared all his subjects equally capable of employments in his service. If this assumption of authority were admitted, the constitution in Church and State would receive its death-blow. The Government would be made arbitrary, and the Establishment Papal. Sancroft consulted with the most eminent clergy who were within reach, and sent a circular letter to others, requesting them to come to London with all convenient speed, and not let it be known that they were thus summoned. Among the more distinguished of an inferior rank who assembled were Tillotson, Stillingfleet, and Sherlock. They began with prayer, and they concluded their deliberations by drawing up a petition, beseeching that the King would not insist upon their distributing and reading his Declaration. Their great averseness to it, they said, proceeded neither from any want of duty or obedience to him, the Church of Eng-

land being both in her principle and constant practice unquestionably loyal; nor from any want of due tenderness to Dissenters, in relation to whom they were willing to come to such a temper as might be thought fit, when that matter should be considered and settled in Parliament and Convocation; but chiefly because that Declaration was founded upon such a dispensing power as had often been declared illegal, and particularly at the beginning of his reign; and was of so great moment to the whole nation, both in Church and State, that they could not in prudence, honour, or conscience, so far make themselves parties to it as the distribution of it, and the solemn publication, even in God's house and the time of Divine service, must amount to in common and reasonable construction. The petition was signed by the Primate, by Lloyd, Bishop of St Asaph; Turner, of Ely; Lake, of Chichester; Ken, of Bath and Wells; White, of Peterborough; and Trelawney, of Bristol.

Sancroft was in an ill state of health, and, moreover, had been forbidden to appear at court for the displeasure which he had previously given by his firmness. The other six immediately crossed the water to present their petition at Whitehall. The King had been flattered into a persuasion that they came to represent to him that orders of this kind were usually addressed to their chancellors, not to themselves, meaning thus to shift off the responsibility, and save their credit by a subterfuge, while they yielded the point. Lloyd, however, requested that the President of the Council would peruse the petition, and inform the King of its purport. The President refused to do this, but obtained their immediate admittance into the royal closet, where they delivered it upon their knees. The King took it graciously, and upon glancing at the writing, said, It is my Lord of Canterbury's own hand. But his countenance darkened as he read, and folding up the paper, he said to them, "This is a great surprise to me! These are strange words. I did not expect this from you. This is a standard of rebellion."

They answered that they had ventured their lives for his Majesty, and would lose the last drop of their blood, rather than lift up a finger against him. I tell you, he repeated, this is a standard of rebellion. I never saw such an address. Trelawney knelt a second time, and exclaimed, Rebellion! Sir, I beseech your Majesty do not say so bad a thing of us! your Majesty cannot but remember that you sent me down into Cornwall to quell Monmouth's rebellion, and I am as ready to do what I can to quell another if there were occasion. Ken said he hoped the

King would give that liberty to them which he allowed to all mankind ; to which White added, Sir, you allow liberty of conscience to all mankind ; the reading this Declaration is against our conscience. Do you question my dispensing power ? said the King. Some of you here have printed and preached for it, when it was for your purpose. The dispensing power was never questioned by the men of the Church of England. To this the Bishop of St Asaph replied, that it had been declared against by the first Parliament of the late King, and by that which he himself had called : and when James insisted that they should publish his Declaration, and was answered by Bishop Ken in language as dutiful as it was resolute, "We are bound to fear God and honour the King ; we desire to do both ; we will honour you ; we must fear God." "Is this," said the indignant monarch, "what I have deserved, who have supported the Church of England, and will support it ? I will remember you that have signed this paper ! I will keep this paper ; I will not part with it. I did not expect this from you, especially from some of you. I will be obeyed in publishing my Declaration." To this Ken replied, "God's will be done !" and when the King exclaimed, What is that ? he repeated the emphatic words. This memorable scene was terminated by the King's saying, "If I think fit to alter my mind, I will send to you. God hath given me this dispensing power, and I will maintain it. I tell you there are seven thousand men, and of the Church of England too, that have not bowed the knee to Baal." And with that he dismissed them.

The King was miserably mistaken concerning the principles of the clergy. There were only four in London who read the declaration, not more than two hundred throughout the whole kingdom : and after the King had thus expressed his displeasure, copies of the petition were subscribed by the Bishops of London, Norwich, Gloucester, Salisbury, Winchester, and Exeter. After nine days of perplexity and indecision, James yielding to evil counsellors and his own unhappy bigotry, summoned the seven first subscribers to appear before him in council, and answer to a charge of misdemeanor. They appeared accordingly, acknowledged their subscriptions, and being asked what they meant by the dispensing power being declared illegal in Parliament, replied, the words were so plain that they could use no plainer. It was demanded of them what want of prudence or honour there could be in obeying the King ? They replied, "What is against conscience is against prudence, and honour

too, especially in persons of our character:" and when they were asked why it was against their conscience, they answered, "Because our consciences oblige us (as far as we are able) to preserve our laws and religion according to the Reformation." Upon other questions they referred to their petition, requested they might be excused from replying to points which might be brought against them, and desired a copy of the charge, and convenient time for advising about and answering it. They were then required to enter into recognisances for appearing in Westminster Hall: this they refused to do, on the ground that it was not usual for members of the House of Peers; declaring, however, that they should be ready to appear and answer whenever they were called. Many attempts were made to make them yield upon this point, but they continued firm, in conformity to the legal advice which they had taken, and were in consequence committed to the Tower.

Popular feeling has seldom been more strongly, never more worthily excited, than on this memorable occasion. The news spread immediately through London, and as the Bishops proceeded down the river to their place of confinement, the banks were crowded with spectators, who, while they knelt and asked their blessing, prayed themselves for a blessing upon them and their cause. The very soldiers who guarded them, and some even of the officers to whose charge they were committed, knelt in like manner before them, and besought their benediction. They the while, strictly consistent in the meek and magnanimous course of duty which they had chosen, exhorted the people to fear God, honour the King, and maintain their loyalty. In the evening they attended in the Tower chapel; and the second lesson for that service being the chapter wherein the Apostle Paul describes by what trials he approved himself a minister of God, and in the name of the Lord says, "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation:" the application was felt by the prisoners and by the nation, all feeling it as consolatory, and perhaps not a few regarding it as prophetic.

A leading man among the Dissenters had been one of the chief advisers of this impolitic act. The King's confessor, Father Petre, could not conceal his joy, that an irremediable breach was thus made with the Church of England, and he is said to have expressed his triumph in language worthy of Gardiner or Bonner in the days of their ascendancy. Louis XIV. also applauded

what he had done, and assured the English Ambassador that he was ready to give the King all manner of assistance. Encouraged thus by evil counsellors, and deluded as much by bigotry, as by a reliance upon the strength of his own Government, and the covenanted aid of France, James did not perceive that of all modes of resistance to his designs he had provoked the most dangerous. The persons with whom he had placed himself at issue, were for their character and station the last with whom he should have chosen to contend; their appeal was to the laws and constitution of the country, and upon a question where the religion of the country was at stake.

On the first day of term the Prelates were brought before the Court of King's Bench, being conveyed as usual by water. They were saluted with acclamations as they went, and with fervent prayers; and in their way from the river-side to Westminster Hall, passed through a lane of people, who kissed their hands and their garments, and begged their blessing. About thirty peers and a considerable number of gentry attended them into court. After some legal objections had been offered and overruled, they pleaded not guilty to the charge of having consulted and conspired to diminish the royal authority, prerogative, and power, and having to that intent unlawfully, maliciously, seditiously, and scandalously composed a false, feigned, pernicious, and seditious libel in manifest contempt of the King and the laws. That day fortnight was fixed for the trial, and they were then admitted to bail upon their own recognisances. The ignorant populace seeing them thus at liberty regarded it as a deliverance, and they celebrated it with public rejoicings. Bonfires were made in the streets, and healths drunk to the Seven Champions of the Church, with an enthusiasm which might have taught the King his danger.

St Peter's day happened to be the time appointed for the trial, and it was supposed that some of James's superstitious advisers had chosen it as a day of good omen, when the influence of the apostle might be expected in behalf of his Roman successors. The counsel for the Prelates availed themselves of all those forms and technicalities which the law of England provides in favour of the accused. They required proof that the signatures to the petition were in their own writing, and that the petition had been presented to the King with their knowledge and consent; a clerk of the Privy Council proved the first, by attesting that they themselves had owned their subscriptions; but upon the latter they must have been acquitted if it had not been

recollected in time that the Earl of Sunderland had introduced them to the King, to deliver the obnoxious paper. It was fortunate for them and for England, that these subterfuges were unavailing, that the case was brought to a fair hearing, and their defence rested upon its proper grounds. The petition, their counsel then maintained, was neither false nor libellous: it was humbly and respectfully expressed, and presented privately, in the exercise of their right as subjects, of their duty as bishops. The charge against them was for attempting to diminish the King's prerogative: the only part of his prerogative to which the petition referred was his dispensing power; and that was a power they contended which the King of England neither did nor could possess. Such a power would strike at the very foundation of all the rights, liberties, and properties of the subject. If the King might suspend the laws of the land concerning religion, there was no other law which he might not suspend; and if he might suspend all the laws, in what condition then were the subjects? all at his mercy. The King's legal prerogatives were as much for the advantage of his subjects as of himself, and no man disputed them; but they who attempted thus to extend his prerogative beyond what was legal, did him no service. The laws which were now in question were the great bulwark of the reformed religion. They are in truth, said Sergeant Pemberton, that which fenceth the religion and Church of England, and we have no other human fence besides. They were made upon a foresight of the mischiefs that had, and might come by false religions in this kingdom; and they were intended to defend the nation against them, and to keep them out: particularly to keep out the Romish religion, which is the very worst of all religions. By the law of all civilised nations, said Somers, "if the prince require something to be done which the person who is to do it takes to be unlawful, it is not only lawful, but his duty *rescribere principi*. This is all that is done here, and that in the most humble manner that can be thought of. Seditious the petition could not be, because it was presented to the King in private and alone: false it could not be, because the matter of it was true. There could be nothing of malice, for the occasion was not sought, the thing was pressed upon them; and a libel it could not be, because the intent was innocent, and they kept within the bounds set by the Act of Parliament that gives the subject leave to apply to his Prince by petition when he is aggrieved."

The Chief Justice, Sir Robert Wright, declared the petition

libellous ; of the three puisne judges, Allybone delivered the like opinion : Holloway and Powel pronounced it to be no libel, and the latter stated in strong terms that the King possessed no dispensing power, and therefore, that the Declaration, being founded upon the assumption of such a power, was illegal. The trial lasted the whole day, and at evening the jury retired. They were persons in respectable circumstances, and fairly chosen ; for James made no attempt to control or pervert the course of justice. They were loud and eager in debate during great part of the night ; food and drink, according to custom, were not allowed them, and when they begged for a candle to light their pipes, that indulgence was refused. At six in the morning the single juryman who had till then held out (and who is said to have been the King's brewer), yielded to the determination of his fellows, and a verdict of not guilty was returned. It was received with a shout which seemed to shake the Hall. The people had not conducted themselves with propriety during the trial ; they had insulted the witnesses for the prosecution, and evinced a temper ready for greater outrages. Their exultation was unbounded now ; and the acquittal was announced in the city by acclamations of tumultuous and triumphant joy, which outstripped the speediest messengers. The Prelates, with a feeling of becoming gratitude, went immediately to Whitehall Chapel to return thanks ; all the churches were filled with people who crowded to them for the same intent ; the bells rung from every tower, every house was illuminated, and bonfires were kindled in every street. Medals were struck in honour of the event, and portraits hastily published, and eagerly purchased, of men who were compared to the Seven Golden Candlesticks, and called the Seven Stars of the Protestant Church.

The King was in the camp at Hounslow when the verdict was pronounced, and asking the cause of a stir among the soldiers, was told it was nothing but their rejoicing for the acquittal of the bishops. "Do you call that nothing?" he replied ; "but so much the worse for them !" His presence in some degree repressed them ; but no sooner had he left the camp, than they set up a shout, which if farther evidence had been needful might have told him how impossible it was for him to overthrow the laws and the religion of England. His eyes were not yet opened to his danger ; and persisting in his purpose, he dismissed the two judges who had delivered their opinion in favour of the bishops, and required, through the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the names of all the clergy who had omitted to read his Declara-

tion. This was so far from intimidating them, that even of those who had read it, no small proportion declared from the pulpit their disapprobation of what they had read. And upon this occasion Sprat, the Bishop of Rochester, who had hitherto acted in the Commission, withdrew from it, saying in a letter he could act in it no longer: for though he had obeyed the order of council himself, thinking himself bound in conscience so to do, he doubted not that those who had not obeyed, acted upon the same principle of following their conscience, and he would rather suffer with them, than concur in making them suffer. This conduct in a prelate who had been thought too pliant to the court, made the Commissioners adjourn, and events soon put an end to that illegal jurisdiction.

Sancroft did not rest satisfied with his deliverance, in the belief that he had sufficiently discharged the duty of his high station. He had shewn himself ready to suffer, and he now came forward with equal resolution to act. Admonitions to the clergy were issued by him through their respective bishops, in which they were enjoined four times at least a year, according to the canon, to "teach and inform the people, that all usurped and foreign jurisdiction had been for most just causes taken away and abolished in this realm," and that no subjection was due to it, or to any who pretended to act by virtue of it; but "the King's power being in his dominions highest under God," the instructions were, that "they upon all occasions persuade the people to loyalty and obedience to his Majesty in all things lawful, and to patient submission in the rest, promoting, as far as in them lay, the public peace and quiet of the world. They were to caution them against all seducers, and especially against Popish emissaries, who were now in great numbers gone forth, more busy and active than ever; and to impress upon them that it was not enough for them to be members of an excellent Church, rightly and duly reformed both in faith and worship, unless they also reformed and amended their own lives, and so ordered their conversation in all things, as becomes the gospel of Christ. And forasmuch as those Romish emissaries, like the old Serpent, are wont to be most busy and troublesome to our people at the end of their lives, labouring to unsettle and perplex them in time of sickness, and at the hour of death; that therefore all who have the cure of souls be more especially vigilant over them at that dangerous season; that they stay not till they be sent for, but inquire out the sick in their respective parishes, and visit them frequently, that they examine them particularly concerning the

state of their souls, and instruct them in their duties, and settle them in their doubts, and comfort them in their sorrows and sufferings, and pray often with them and for them ; and by all the methods which our Church prescribes, prepare them for the due and worthy receiving of the Holy Eucharist, the pledge of their happy resurrection : thus with their utmost diligence watching over every sheep within their fold (especially in that critical moment), lest those ravening wolves devour them." Lastly, they were charged to walk in wisdom toward those who were not of their communion, conferring with them in the spirit of meekness, and seeking by all good ways and means to win them over ; more especially with regard to their brethren the Protestant Dissenters, "that upon occasion offered they visit them at their houses, and receive them kindly at their own, and treat them fairly wherever they meet them, discoursing calmly and civilly with them ; persuading them, if it may be, to a full compliance with our Church ; or at least that 'whereto we have all attained, we may all walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing.' And in order hereunto, that they take all opportunities of assuring and convincing them, that the Bishops of this Church are really and sincerely irreconcilable enemies to the errors, superstitions, idolatries, and tyrannies of the Church of Rome ; and that the very unkind jealousies which some have had of us to the contrary, were altogether groundless. And in the last place, that they warmly and most affectionately exhort them to form with us a daily fervent prayer to the God of Peace for the universal blessed union of all reformed churches, both at home and abroad, against our common enemies : that all they who do confess the holy name of our dear Lord, and do agree in the truth of his holy word, may also meet in one holy communion, and live in perfect unity and godly love."

The more moderate and reasonable Dissenters were now awake to their danger : they saw the condition of the French Protestants, and perceived that nothing but the calm and steady opposition of the Church of England prevented the Romanists from regaining a supremacy which they were as ready as ever to abuse ; for they had abated nothing of their fraud, their intolerance, or their inhumanity. The better part, therefore, felt now how much more important were the points on which they agreed with the Church, than those on which they differed ; and the scheme of comprehension was revived with less improbability of success than on any former occasion. But the course of events brought on a more violent crisis than Sancroft, who had this

scheme at heart, could approve; and the circumstances which ensued made him who was most desirous of healing one schism, unhappily the head of another. Men who were more of statesmen than divines, and who had less confidence than Sancroft in the cause, and in the strength of unyielding principles, were in correspondence with the Prince of Orange; and preparations were made in Holland for an expedition, on which the fate of the Protestant cause depended. When James received the first certain intelligence of this danger, he turned pale, and the letter dropped from his hand. The fear, indeed, which then possessed him, was manifested as plainly by his conduct as in his countenance; he published a Declaration that he would preserve the Church of England inviolable, that he was willing the Romanists should remain excluded from Parliament, and that he was ready to do everything else for the safety and advantage of his loving subjects. He sent also for the bishops, whom, as persons lying under his marked displeasure, he had not seen since their trial, and receiving their general expression of duty, assured them of his favour. The interview ended in this; but the bishops requested Sancroft to obtain for them a second audience, in which they might address the King as plainly and sincerely as their duty and his danger required.

They were introduced by Sancroft with a speech not unworthy of the occasion. Illness had prevented him from attending on the former summons; but he had heard, he said, from the King himself, and from his reverend brethren, that nothing had passed further than general expressions of his Majesty's gracious inclinations to the Church, and their reciprocal duty and loyalty to him, both which were sufficiently understood and declared before. "Sir," he continued, "I found it grieved my Lords the Bishops to have come so far and to have done so little; and I am assured they came then prepared to have given your Majesty some more particular instances of their duty and zeal for your service, had they not apprehended from some words which fell from your Majesty, that you were not then at leisure to receive them. It was for this reason, then, that I besought your Majesty to command us once more to attend you all together. We are, therefore, here now before you, with all humility, to beg your permission that we may suggest to your Majesty such advice as we think proper at this season, and conducing to your service, and so leave them for your princely consideration." Then, with the King's leave, he read the humble advice of himself and his brethren, which was to this purport: that the King

would be pleased to put the government of the several counties into the hands of such of the nobility and gentry as were legally qualified; that he would annul the Ecclesiastical Commission, and that no such court as that Commission set up might be erected in future; that no dispensation might be granted or continued, by which persons not duly qualified by law might hold any place in Church or State, or in the Universities, and that the President and Fellows of Magdalen College might be restored: that licenses for persons of the Romish Communion to teach public schools might be set aside, and none such granted for the future: that his Majesty would be graciously pleased to desist from the exercise of such a dispensing power as had of late been used, and permit that point to be freely and calmly debated, and finally settled in Parliament: that he would inhibit the four foreign bishops who styled themselves Vicars Apostolical, from further invading the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, which is by law vested in the bishops of this Church (these Romish prelates had been recently consecrated in the King's Chapel, and sent out to exercise Episcopal functions in their respective dioceses, where they dispersed their pastoral letters under the express permission of the King): that he would restore the ancient charters, privileges, and franchises, to those Corporations which had been deprived of them: that he would issue writs for the calling of a free and regular Parliament, in which the Church of England might be secured according to the Acts of Uniformity, provision made for due liberty of conscience, and for securing the liberties and properties of all his subjects, and mutual confidence and good understanding established between him and all his people; above all, they requested that he would permit them to offer such arguments as, they trusted, might, by God's grace, be effectual for persuading him to return to the Communion of the Church of England, "into whose most Catholic faith," said they, "you were baptized, and in which you were educated, and to which it is our daily earnest prayer to God, that you may be re-united. These, Sir, are the humble advices which, out of conscience to the duty we owe to God, to your Majesty, and to your country, we think fit at this time to offer to your Majesty, as suitable to the present state of your affairs, and most conducing to your service; and so to leave them to your princely consideration. And we heartily beseech Almighty God, 'in whose hands the hearts of all kings are, so to dispose and govern yours, that in all your thoughts, words, and works, you may ever seek his honour and glory, and study to preserve

the people committed to your charge, in wealth, peace, and godliness, to your own both temporal and eternal happiness.” The paper was signed by Archbishop Sancroft, as his composition; and by the Bishops of London, Winchester, St Asaph, Ely, Chichester, Rochester, Bath and Wells, and Peterborough, as heartily concurring in it.

Awakened as James was to the consequences of his own imprudence, he received this advice as if he were sensible of its value, thanked them for it, and promised to observe it. The promise was sincere; and in the course of a few days he dissolved the Ecclesiastical Commission, re-established the Fellows of Magdalen, and restored the Corporations. It was too late: the nation felt that under a king whose conscience was not in his own keeping, there could be no safety against the ambition of a restless Church, which kept no faith, and held principles upon which, by the strictest reasoning, persecution becomes a duty. Some farther security than promises, or even proofs of an altered system, were become needful; what that security should be, perhaps no persons knew or could satisfy themselves; this only was apparent, that it could only be obtained through the interference of the Prince of Orange, whose close alliance with the royal family gave him a proper interest in what was also the cause of the reformed religion. It was observed, with just jealousy, that even in the Declaration which James had issued in pursuance of his promise, he had spoken of the Church of England as by law established, never of the Protestant or reformed religion: and the Papistical reservation was clearly understood, which looked upon the Popish Church still as the lawful one. Even the measure of summoning the bishops to advise the King separately, without any of the other peers, was thought to be a device for rendering them suspected, and weakening their influence with the nation. And this effect would have followed; if Sancroft, when he was commanded to compose a form of prayer suited to the existing danger of the kingdom, had not performed his difficult task with such excellent discretion as at the same time to satisfy the King, and confirm the people in their constitutional and religious duty.

As the danger drew nearer James required the bishops to draw up a paper, expressing their abhorrence of the Prince of Orange's intended invasion; this, he insisted, was the more necessary, because William, in his Declaration, affirmed that several of the Lords, spiritual and temporal, had invited him to England. They denied having any part in, or knowledge of, such an invita-

tion; and argued that the very clause which mentioned it, rendered the authenticity of the manifesto suspicious; for if the thing were true, it would be unwise in the Prince to avow it so soon; and if false, it could hardly be imagined that he would publish a manifest untruth, making it the ground of his enterprise. What! . . . was the King's indignant answer; He that can do as he does, think you he will stick at a lie? You all know how usual it is for men in such cases to affirm any kind of falsehoods for the advantage of their cause. The prelates had here to steer a difficult course: what the King desired was, that they should put forth the whole influence of the Church against an expedition which was undertaken for the preservation of that Church and of the Protestant cause, and this they were determined not to do. They endeavoured to evade the point, by saying how much they had already suffered for interfering with matters of state. James observed that this was not to the purpose, and that he thought all that had been forgotten; that it concerned him more to have the bishops issue such a paper as he required, than that the temporal lords should do it, because they had greater interests with the people; and that as all London would know what he had asked of them, it would be a great prejudice to his affairs if it were denied. They were firm to their purpose: the place, they said, in which they could best serve him, was in Parliament, and when he should please to call one he would find that the true interest of the Church of England is inseparable from the true interest of the Crown. My lords, replied the King, that is a business of more time. What I ask now, I think of present concernment to my affairs. But this is the last time; I will urge you no farther. If you will not assist me as I desire, I must stand upon my own legs, and trust to myself and my own arms. They made answer that as bishops they did assist him with their prayers, and as peers they entreated that they might serve him, either by his speedily calling a parliament, or if that were thought too remote, by assembling with them as many of the temporal lords as were in London, or its vicinity. But this would not answer the end which James purposed.

It was not known that the Prince of Orange had then actually effected a landing. When that intelligence arrived, the bishops and some of the temporal peers assembled at Lambeth, and joined in an address to the King, stating, that under a deep sense of the miseries of a war then breaking forth in the bowels of the kingdom, of the danger to which his person was thereby

like to be exposed, as also of the distractions of the people by reason of their present grievances, they thought themselves bound in conscience of the duty which they owed to God, to their holy religion, to his Majesty and to their country, to represent that, in their opinion, the only visible way for preserving himself and the kingdom, would be the calling a parliament regular and free in all its circumstances. His reply was: "What you ask of me I most passionately desire; and I promise you, upon the faith of a King, that I will have a parliament, and such a one as you ask for, as soon as ever the Prince of Orange has quitted this realm. For how is it possible a parliament should be free in all its circumstances, as you petition for, whilst an enemy is in the kingdom, and can make a return of near an hundred voices?" There was more truth, as well as spirit, in this reply, than the people were in a humour to acknowledge. But James by his previous misconduct had placed himself in such a situation, that act how he would now, it was impossible for him to act well. He was beset with false counsellors, and faithless friends, as much as with difficulties; and though sincere enough to sacrifice everything for the sake of his religion, and never to regret that sacrifice, he could obtain no credit for sincerity in any profession, or promises, or pledges to his people, because they knew that all pledges were set at nought if the interest of the Romish Church required that they should be broken.

A few days afterward, when he became more sensible of his extreme danger, he summoned a parliament; it was too late: the writs had not been issued, when he fled from London, and Sancroft, with other spiritual and temporal peers, joined in applying to the Prince of Orange to call one. Thus far the Primate aided in the revolution, no farther. When James was brought back to Whitehall, Sancroft was one of the prelates who waited on him there, and to whom he expressed a sense of their dutiful affection towards him. If indeed he contrasted the conduct of Becket, and other Popish prelates, toward his predecessors, and that of the Puritanical clergy toward his father, with the steady, respectful, dutiful, and peaceful opposition which he had himself experienced from Sancroft and his brethren, he must have perceived the value of that Church, which he in his bigotry had endeavoured to subvert. Something like this he seems to have felt; and one of the first letters which he wrote from France after his final flight, was to the Primate, saying that he had intended to have laid before him the grounds and motives

of his conversion to the Roman Catholic religion, but that the suddenness of his departure had prevented it. He had not been persuaded, he said, to change while he was young; the conversion had taken place in his riper years, and on the full conviction of his mind; but he never refused speaking freely with those of the Protestant persuasion, and particularly with him, whom he always considered to be his friend, and for whom he had a great esteem. If James had conversed upon these subjects with Sancroft, and such men as Sancroft, instead of the Jesuits with whom he was surrounded, happy might it have been for himself, and his family, and his kingdoms.

Upon the important question of settling the Government, which now ensued, the great body of the clergy agreed in opinion with the Primate that the best course was to declare the King incapable of the Government, and to appoint the Prince of Orange *Custos Regni*, to carry it on in the King's right and name. "The political capacity or authority of the King," thus Sancroft reasoned, "are perfect and cannot fail; but his person being human and mortal, and not otherwise privileged than the rest of mankind, is subject to all the defects and failings of it. He may therefore be incapable of directing the Government either by absence, by infancy, by lunacy, deliracy, or apathy, whether by nature or casual infirmity; or lastly, by some invincible prejudices of mind, contracted and fixed by education and habit, with unalterable resolutions superinduced, in matters wholly inconsistent and incompatible with the laws, religion, peace, and true policy of the kingdom." The Archbishop saw that James had placed himself in this predicament, and thinking that the appointment of a regent upon these grounds was the only just course, he believed it therefore to be the only wise one. "For it is a great truth," said he, "that the mind and opinion of every individual person is an ingredient into the happiness or ruin of a government, though it be not discerned till it comes to the eruption of a general discontent. Things just, and good, and grateful, should be done without expectation of immediate payment for so doing, but in the course and felicity of proceedings wherein there will certainly, though insensibly, be a full return. For all things in which the public is concerned, tend constantly, though slowly, and at last violently, to the justice of them: and if a *vis impressa* happens, and carries them (as for the most part it doth) beyond or beside what is just, yet that secret vigour and influence of particular and private men's inclinations, brings them back again to the

true perpendicular. And whoever he is that hath to do in the public, and slights these considerations, preferring some political scheme before them, shall find his hypothesis full of flattery at the first, of trouble in the proceeding, and of confusion in the last."

Thus excellently did this wise and upright man reason; but he soon found that in a time of political troubles, good men find it easier to suffer than to act. The fear of doing wrong produced in him a vacillation, or at least a timidity of mind which rendered him incapable of taking a decided part; and when the question was debated in the House of Lords, whether a regent should be appointed, or the throne filled up as being vacant, Sancroft was not present at the debate. His presence might not improbably have turned the scale, for it was carried against a regency but by a majority of two. Only two bishops voted for filling up the throne, nine against it; and when the oath of allegiance to William and Mary was to be taken, nine prelates refused to take it. Among those who thus chose to incur the penalty of deprivation rather than transfer that allegiance, which they believed to be indefeasible, were Sancroft, Ken, Turner, Lake, and White, five of those seven to whose magnanimous resistance the nation was mainly indebted for its deliverance from an arbitrary government, and a persecuting religion. About four hundred of the clergy followed their example. The great body, agreeing with them and with the national voice as pronounced in Parliament, that Popery is inconsistent with the English constitution, admitted the justice and necessity of the law by which all Papists were for ever excluded from the succession to the crown.

That the Nonjurors judged erroneously must be admitted; but never were any men who acted upon an erroneous opinion more entitled to respect. Ferocious libels were published against them, wherein hints were given that the people would do well in *De-Witting* them, a bloody* word derived from an accursed deed, at that time fresh in remembrance. The Government, however, treated them with tenderness, and long put off the deprivation which it was at length compelled to pronounce: but it is not to its honour that it reserved no provision for the sequestered clergy, considering their offence consisted only in adhering to the principle without which no Government can be secure; and that although an act was passed allowing the King

* The word is used also in the Lockhart Papers (vol. ii. p. 162): "Had he himself been in town, they had certainly De-Witted him."

to continue, to any twelve of these persons, a third of their former revenue, this bounty was not exercised in a single instance; . . . this can only be excused by supposing there may have been a well-founded apprehension that the allowance would have been refused if offered. If a few individuals were engaged in correspondence with the exiled family, the greater number gave no offence to the Government, nor excited any jealousy, but contented themselves with practising the non-resistance which they taught. As their opinions were not connected with any political or religious enthusiasm, there was nothing to perpetuate them, and the Nonjurors died away long before the House of Stuart was extinct.

From the time of the Revolution the Church of England has partaken of the stability and security of the State. Here, therefore, I terminate this compendious, but faithful, view of its rise, progress, and political struggles. It has rescued us, first from heathenism, then from papal idolatry and superstition; it has saved us from temporal as well as spiritual despotism. We owe to it our moral and intellectual character as a nation; much of our private happiness, much of our public strength. Whatever should weaken it, would in the same degree injure the common weal; whatever should overthrow it, would in sure and immediate consequence bring down the goodly fabric of that Constitution, whereof it is a constituent and necessary part. If the friends of the Constitution understand this as clearly as its enemies, and act upon it as consistently and as actively, then will the Church and State be safe, and with them the liberty and the prosperity of our country.

THE END.

INDEX.

A.

ABBEYS, their lands seized, 257. Lavish waste of the wealth of the convents by the crown, 258. The venerable abbeys plundered and ruined, *ib.* See MONASTERIES.

Abbott, Archbishop, favours the Puritans, 369. His tyranny in presiding over the High Court of Commission, *ib.* His remissness, 377.

Abjuration of reformed doctrines by Bishop Pecock, 195. Penance and branding of those who abjured, 203. Recantation of Cranmer, repented of by him, 315.

Acton, Sir Roger, burnt for treason and heresy, reign of Henry V., 190.

Ages, the dark, state of society, 141, *et seq.*

Alban, St, his history and martyrdom, 7.

Alban's, St, great council at, 134.

Albigenses persecuted by Dominic, 162, 165.

Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherburn, 42.

Alexander III. holds a council at Tours,

74. His reply to Henry of England regarding Becket, 89. He condemns

ten of the Constitutions of Clarendon, *ib.* Upon Becket's resignation of his

see into his hands, the Pope reinvests

him in terms of encouragement and

applause, 90. His inconsistency in

giving support to Henry II. as well as

to Becket, 98. His further policy in

supporting the cause of the English

primate against his sovereign, 106, *et*

seq.

Alfader, or God, in the Danish superstition, 33.

Alfred the Great enforces baptism, 38.

Punishes with death those who sacrificed to idols, 39. Accession of, 43.

Ignorance of the clergy of his time, *ib.*

Allegories, mystical, of the Danes, 34.

Allen, Papist, a voluntary exile, 337.

Made a cardinal, *ib.* He is founder of

the Jesuits, 338. His advice to man

the Armada with English sailors, 343.

Altar, a communion table supersedes the, 255. The adornments of the altars are transferred to private houses, 256.

Alva, the Duke of, 341.

Anabaptists, German and Dutch, executed, 264, 345.

Angles or Saxons, slaves exported from England, 11.

Anne, Queen of Richard II., protects the Lollards, 174.

Anselm, his rise to ecclesiastical power

predicted by Lanfranc, 63. Arch-

bishop of Canterbury, 66. Requires

William II. to appoint to the vacant

benefices, *ib.* Resorts to Rome with-

out the king's leave, 67. Received

with honour by Urban, who supports

him against William Rufus, *ib.* Is

required by Henry I. to do homage

for his see or leave England, 68. Re-

fuses to do either, *ib.* Compromise

and agreement regarding homage and

investiture, 69. Reforms church dis-

cipline, *ib.* Strictly enjoins celibacy

of clergy, *ib.* Is canonised, 70. Mira-

cles alleged at his sepulture by his

historian Eadmer, *ib.*

Aquinas, Thomas, 177.

Arians and Socinians, 265, 289, 344, 366.

Opinions of Arminius, 366, 426.

Arthur, Prince, his inheritance usurped

by King John, 127.

Articles of the Church, the, 356.

Arundel, Archbishop, his treason, 174.

Consigns the Lollards to the flames,

ib. et seq. His severity in argument

with, and condemnation of, Sir John

Oldcastle, 182-189.

Aske, Robert, heads a formidable in-

surrection, 230. Henry VIII. puts

him to death, 232.

Askew, Anne, repudiated by Kyme, her

husband, for turning Protestant, 241.

Charges against her by a Papist, *ib.*

Her examination and replies, *ib.*

Bailed for a season, yet carried before

Bishop Gardiner, 242. Her address

Askew, Anne—*continued*.

in writing to Henry VIII., 242. She is tortured to induce her to accuse the queen (Katharine Parr) and her ladies, *ib.* She is burnt, at night, with Lascelles and others, 243.

Assembly of Divines, of the Puritans, and the Parliament, 395, 425. Its confession of faith Calvinistic, 426.

Aston, Sir Thomas, 393.

Asylum, every church regarded as such in the dark ages, 141.

Audley, the chancellor, Sir Thomas, receives a grant of Christ Church in London; anecdote honourable to the Londoners, 233.

Augustine, his mission to England, 12. Causes conducive to its happy result, 14. His address to Ethelbert, *ib.* Praises of his ministerial labours, 31, *note*. His doctrine inquired into: how far it may have perverted the Christian practice of faith, 150.

Austria, the Duke, seizes on Richard Cœur de Lion, 127.

Auto-da-fé, 320, 325. *See* MARTYRS.

B.

Bacon, Sir Nicholas, lord-keeper, 228.

Badby, John, condemned to the flames for his opinion against transubstantiation, 177. Refuses Prince Henry's (Henry V.) offer of pardon, at the stake, *ib.*

Bainham, James, martyrdom of, 206. His dying words, *ib.*

Bale regretted the devastation of the abbays, 259.

Baliol, Joceline de, excommunicated for his share in the Constitutions of Clarendon, 94.

Bancroft, Bishop of London, 356. Made archbishop; he ejects Nonconformists from benefices, 368.

Baptism, the sacrament of, necessary to salvation, 228.

Bardic and Druidical doctrines, 2.

Bards, their predictions of the restoration of power to the Britons, 24.

Bari, council of, 67.

Barons of England, distrusted by John, 131, 133. They decline attending the king to France, alleging a want of resources, 134. They incur his displeasure, 135. They refuse to pay escuage, *ib.* Their meeting at St Edmundsbury, 136. They petition the king, and arm, 137. Meet in array at Stamford, *ib.* They demand the ancient liberties of the king's commissioners, 138. Style themselves the army of the Church, and besiege Northampton, *ib.* They seize on London, *ib.* Obtain Magna Charta at Runnymede, on the river

Barons of England—*continued*.

Thames, 138. Decline of their influence and power, 180. Subservient to Henry VIII., 222, 227.

Barnes, Sir George, Mayor of London, 294.

Barnes, Robert, prior of the Augustines at Canterbury, 211. Accused for his doctrines; he escapes beyond sea, *ib.*

Bartholomew, St, massacre of, 336.

Baxter, quotation from, 303. Assists at conferences, 437, 439.

Becket, Thomas à, his early influence with Henry II., 73. Portrait given of him, *ib.* Archbishop, 74. He follows the Benedictine rule; his scruples of conscience, *ib.* He proceeds for the recovery of church lands, 75. His conduct with regard to the punishment of criminal churchmen, 76. His arrogance on this question completes the breach between the king and him, 77. He unwillingly consents to the Constitutions of Clarendon, 78. Imposes penance on himself for so doing, which the Pope remits, 80. The king's anger; Becket embarks for France, *ib.* Sailors refuse to convey him, *ib.* His resolution to resist Henry, 81. The king exacts monies from him, *ib.* Becket's extraordinary course of resistance, 82–85. He appeals after trial to the Pope, 86. Flies to Flanders, 88. Secures the favour of Louis of France, *ib.* His cause supported by the conclave, 89. He resigns into the Pope's hands, is restored to his see by Alexander III., and during his exile assumes the Cistercian habit at Pontigny, 90, 91. Invested with the authority of legate to England, 92. He excommunicates some of the supporters of Henry, condemns the Constitutions of Clarendon, and menaces the king, 94. Henry fears an interdict; his vigorous measures against the legate Becket, 97. Distresses of the primate's dependants, 98. Becket remonstrates with Pope Alexander on his measures, 99. He kneels before Henry, at an interview in France, 101. He demands all confiscations from himself and the ministry to be repaid, 103. Being refused, he excommunicates many of Henry's household, as well as the bishops of London and Salisbury, *ib.* These censures well serve his purposes, 104. His interview with Henry in Touraine narrated, 108. The king's concessions, who holds Becket's stirrups in compliment, 109. Reconciliation effected, *ib.* The coronation of Prince Henry, without the means desired by his Holiness, offends Becket, 107, 112. He suspends the bishops of London and Salisbury,

Becket, Thomas à—*continued.*

by excommunication, 103. Second excommunication against them sent by a nun, who precedes Becket to England, 113. Indignation of the sheriff of Kent expressed on this occasion to Becket, when landing at Sandwich, 114. Hearty reception by his flock at Canterbury, *ib.* His proposal to the suspended bishops refused, and they embark for Normandy, 115. Assassinated by De Tracy and Brito, 117, *et seq.* He was warned of his peril, 118. His heroism, *ib.*; and death, 119. He is declared a saint and martyr, 123. Jubilee in honour of him, and pilgrims with offerings, 124. Gold of his shrine, 234. False and real skull, *ib.* Henry VIII. strikes Becket's name from the Kalendar, *ib.*

Bede, quotations from the Venerable, 7, 17.

Bells, church, 257.

Benedict, St, rule of, 49.

Benedictine monasteries, 38, 43. Take the lead of all monkish institutions, by the mildness of their discipline, 49. Union of the order, under a general, *ib.* They supersede the secular clergy in their cures, 54.

Benningfield, Sir Henry, his severity to Elizabeth when in his custody, 322.

Berenger opposes the doctrine of transubstantiation, 157.

Bernicia, description and history of the northern kingdom of, 18–24. Laid waste by Cadwallon, the Briton, 24.

Bertha, Queen, causes the favourable reception of Augustine at Canterbury, 13.

Bilney, Thomas, his study of divinity, 203. Grounds of his accusation, *ib.* His recantation, *ib.* His new resolution, *ib.* Charged with giving an English New Testament, 204. Comforts himself by the words of Scripture, 205. Is burnt, 206. His disciples, Latimer, 216; and Lambert, 236.

Bishops, Augustine, 11–15. Melitus, 18. Laurentius, *ib.* Paulinus, 20–23. Episcopal Church government, 39. A cathedral is cause of Saxon princes assuming the name of king, *ib.* Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, 40. The authority of bishops, 42. Chorepiscopi, or rural bishops, *ib.* Chapters, or ecclesiastical courts, held, *ib.* Power of Odo the primate, 50–52. Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, 53. Lanfranc, 59, *et seq.* Anselm, 66. Thomas à Becket, 73, *et seq.* The bishops endeavour to conciliate Henry and Becket, but fail against such stubborn tempers, 82–84. They transfer their obedi-

Bishops, Augustine—*continued.*

ence from the Primate to the Pope, 86. The bishops and barons give support to Henry II., 92, 97. Becket excommunicates the bishops of London and Salisbury, 103. The prelates quail before the legate's power, 104. The coronation of Prince Richard gives new umbrage to Rome, 107, 110. The two prelates again excommunicated and suspended from their churches, 112. The bishops, King John's time, interdict the kingdom and fly, 130. Its consequences among the people, 131. Archbishop Langton, 128–140. Simon de Islip, 167. Simon Langham, *ib.* Archbishop Sudbury, 169; is murdered in Wat Tyler's insurrection, 172. Succeeded by Courtney, *ib.* Archbishop Arundel persecutes the Lollards, 174. The merciless Bishop Nix, 197, 204. Tonstal, Bishop of London, 203, 208. Cardinal Wolsey, 199, 211. Gardiner, 214. Cranmer made primate, 215. First mention of Protestant bishops, 228. Latimer, 216, 232. Bishop Hooper, 254. Ridley, 255–267. The Protestant bishops dispossessed, 270. Conduct of bishops on the accession of Elizabeth, 324–327. The vacant sees filled by Parker, Grindal, Cox, Sands, Jewel, Parkhurst, and Pilkington, 327. The exiled Protestant bishops return, *ib.* Elizabeth replies to the expository letter of Bonner, Heath, and Tuberville, the deprived bishops, 330. Archbishop Whitgift, 350, 356. Bancroft, 356, 369. Archbishop Abbot, *ib.* Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, 374–381, 403–424. Episcopacy abolished by the Puritans and Parliament, 429. The vacant sees filled by Charles II., 433. Sancroft primate, 444, 445. The seven bishops committed by James II., 448.

Bocher, Joan, condemned to the flames by Cranmer and Edward VI., for denying the humanity of Christ, 265.

Boleyn, Queen Anne, 200. Espoused by Henry VIII., 202. How far the Reformation was due to these nuptials, 216. Her patronage of Latimer, *ib.*

Boleyn, Sir Thomas, 216.

Boniface, Pope, sends missions and presents to the Anglo-Saxon kings, 21.

Bonner, Bishop, his oath of fidelity to Henry VIII. against the Pope, 240. Dismissed from his bishop's see, 254. Restored, and tries such as are charged with heresies in the Marian persecution, 271, 273, 301, 302, 304, 307, 321. Is imprisoned in the Marshalsea, and is in great public odium, 331.

Borromeo, S. Carlo, 143.
 Boughton, Joan, and her daughter, Lady Young, burnt, 196.
 Bourne, Bishop of Bath, his ingratitude, 287.
 Bower, Sir Martin, interrogates Anne Askew, 241.
 Bradford, John, affecting narrative of his burning, 286-291.
 Brætwalda, or paramount sovereign of the Heptarchy, 16.
 Bran, father of Caractacus, 6.
 Branfield, Elias de, his mission to Rome, 128.
 Britons, origin unknown, 2. Religion, 3. 4. Domestic institutions, 5. Shake off the Roman yoke to their loss, 10.
 Cadwallon, 24. Their hopes, *ib.* Those established in Wales, 24, 31.
 Broc, Ranulf de, excommunicated, 117.
 Brooke, Lord, 398.
 Brooks, Bishop of Gloucester, tries Ridley and Latimer, 294. On the new commission against Cranmer, 309. His speech, *ib.*
 Bucer, opinions of, 255.
 Bullinger, Swiss reformer, 274.
 Burgess, Dr Cornelius, 429.
 Byrthelm, Bishop of Dorchester, 53.

C.

Cadwallon, British king, defeats Edwin and his Christian army, and ravages Northumbria, 24. His own disaster and death, *ib.*
 Calamy deputed by the Presbyterians to Lord Clarendon, 435. His letter intercepted, marks insincerity, *ib.* Conferences, 436, 437.
 Caledonian invasion of Britain, 9.
 Calvin's approval of Cranmer's church government, 264. His opinions, 346. The irreversible decrees of Calvinism, 375. Sour spirit of his doctrine, 377.
 Cambridge, its schools established, 71. The university demands that some of the suppressed monasteries should be made colleges, 232.
 Campian, the Jesuit, executed, 340.
 Canon law so employed by priests as to protect themselves, 72.
 Canterbury, royal city of, 14, 15. Church music introduced, 29, 40. Archbishop Theodore, 40. Celebrated school, *ib.* School instituted by Theodore, seventh archbishop, *ib.* Dunstan receives the pall from Pope John XII., 53. Cathedral rebuilt by Lanfranc, 62. History of Archbishop Becket, 71-127. He is assassinated in the cathedral, 119. Upon the decease of Archbishop Hubert, an important contest arose in the election of rival candidates, between the king, Pope, and the clergy,

Canterbury—*continued.*

128. The monks expelled, 129. *See* BISHOPS.
 Carthusians, or monks of Chartreux, 221.
 Cartwright less violent in old age in his religious dissent, 353, 356.
 Cassian, his tenets modified in Semipelagianism, 151.
 Castro, F. Alonso de, confessor to Philip II., account of, 288.
 Catharine of Arragon, queen of Henry VIII., 200, *et seq.* She speaks of her affection for the king when she is dying, 227.
 Catholic (Roman) faith. *See* ROME.
 Cecil, Sir William, secretary to Elizabeth, 322, 328. Lord Burleigh, a profound statesman, 334.
 Celibacy of priests, 50, 53, 60, 69, 70, 238, 253. Their marriages declared unlawful, 270. Non-observance of, by Ministers of religion, one cause, among others, of extreme persecution, 274, 280, 304, 309. Their marriages declared lawful, 365.
 Chapters' or bishops' courts, 42.
 Charles I., accession of, 370. The Commons refuse him supplies for carrying on the war, *ib.* Danger from the Puritans, *ib.* The king attempts to govern without a Parliament, and raise resources by his prerogative, 371. The Puritans occupying many pulpits, broach the doctrine that preaching is necessary, and Scripture without exposition of little effect, 372. The commonalty crowd to their sermons, *ib.* "Tuning the pulpits," 372. Archbishop LAUD, 374, 376, 381. Persecution of, 403-413. Trial and defence, 413-416. The Primate condemned to die, *ib.* He is beheaded, 417-428. Charles I. declares that no Papist should be put to death, 375. His zeal for the Protestant Church, 376. The Star-chamber, and the promulgation of the New Canons, offend the people, 378. The divine right of kings declared, 379. The Scotch malcontents; account of the Covenant, 383, *et seq.* Measures of the Parliament, 384. The trial of Strafford, 385; and of Laud, 385-424. Protestation of Parliament to maintain the true reformed religion, 387. Efforts of the Puritans against the Church, 389-391. The bishops' protest; those who signed it sent to the Tower by Parliament, 394. Bishops deprived of their seats, *ib.* The queen Henrietta, *ib.* The assembly of divines convoked, 395. Their measures, *ib.* The king unable to turn the torrent of Puritanical innovation, 395-401. He sends to Laud a pardon, which the Parliament disal-

Charles I.—*continued.*

lows, 416. He betakes himself to the Scotch army, 428. Terms proposed by the Presbyterians that he should abolish Episcopacy, *ib.* He resolves to maintain it, *ib.* Murder of the king, 430. His advice to Prince Charles concerning the Church, 431. His vow, 432.

Charles II. recalled from exile, 430. His declaration from Breda, 433, 437. Religious liberty offered by Charles; is resisted by the opposing sects, 433. They provoke the court by their conduct, *ib.* Reports as to his and James's religion being the Popish, 434. Joy of the people at his return, *ib.* Act of Uniformity passed, 437. Clause of renouncing the Covenant occasions the Presbyterian ministers to be deprived, 438. Some of the wiser ministers conform and are promoted, 439. Charles's new declaration of toleration, *ib.* The Five-mile Act imposes an oath on the clergy, 440. The Dissenters unable to take this oath, *ib.* Plots by Algernon Sydney and others, 441. Conspirators executed, *ib.* The fire of London, *ib.* Charles dies in the Romish profession, *ib.*

Cheke, Sir John, preceptor to Edward VI., 249.

Chester, Sir William, sheriff, 282.

Chillingworth, 400, 412.

Christ, the only efficient Mediator, 228. Reverence made to his holy name, 389. The Puritans refuse to bow at the name of Jesus, 395, 425.

Christianity introduced into Britain, 6. First martyr, 7. Era of adoption at Rome, 8. British and Irish saints, fabulous, *ib.* Banished from the Heptarchy, 10. Mission of Augustine, 12, 13. Compared with heathen rites, 16. Is established in all the Saxon kingdoms, 25. Causes of its general adoption by the Anglo-Saxon princes, *ib.* The missionaries described; their noble and zealous motives, 26. Moral and political benefits obtained by its introduction, 28. Use of the alphabet, *ib.* Latin employed by ecclesiastics, 29; and by the fathers of the Western Church in their voluminous writings, *ib.* Zeal and enthusiasm excited, 30. Doctrinal corruptions and ceremonial innovations, 32. Popularity, and admirable exertions of the ministers and priests, 31. Augustine's doctrine, 14, 31. Government of the Church, and application of tithes, 39, 40. Church government of the Anglo-Saxons, 42. Its state in the age of St Dunstan, 49. Revolution in monachism; change from austerity to milder rule and comfort, *ib.* Miracles of Dunstan, 53.

Christianity.—*continued.*

Miracles countenanced by Lanfranc, 62. State of religion at Rome under Hildebrand, 63. The primitive Christians, 156. Confession made to priests, *ib.* See CHURCH and REFORMATION.

Christ's Hospital founded by Edward VI., 266.

Church, the, among the Britons, 6, 12, 13. St Augustine, 12. Of the Anglo-Saxons, 14-25. Advantages derived therefrom to the nations of the Heptarchy, 26-30. Corruptions, 32. Of the Welsh, 31. Purity of the Church long preserved, *ib.*, 42. Early Church government in England, Episcopal, 39. Monasteries, cathedrals, endowments of land, *ib.* Oblations and origin of tithes, *ib.* Religious and charitable purposes of, 39. Church property; churches vested in the founders, 41. Glebe lands, *ib.* Building, endowing, and dependence of churches, *ib.* Ecclesiastical government, 42. Advancement of learning, 41, 42. Monasteries plundered, 43. Monachism; era of Dunstan, *ib.* Pious bequests of lands to him, transferred to the Abbey of Glastonbury, 48. He purposes to reform the Church with a view to curb the licentiousness of its ministers, *ib.* The prelacy overturn the power of king Edwy, 52. Struggle between the regular and secular clergy, 53. Bishop Beornelm supports the secular ministers; Dunstan's reply, 54. Changes in the prelacy by William of Normandy, 58. A liturgy established in the Anglo-Norman churches, 62. The right of investiture of prelates disputed, 67, 69. Homage to kings for the temporalities of bishops' sees, *ib.* Decay of discipline; no councils held; Archbishop Anselm's reforms, *ib.* Severity of canons, *ib.* Celibacy of clergy enforced, *ib.* Henry I. realises a tax on clergy who retained their wives, 70. State of the Church on the accession of Henry II., 72. Clergy exempt from secular jurisdiction, *ib.* Immunity and privileges of the order of clergy, 75. Constitutions of Clarendon declared, 78. They rectify the concessions of King Stephen to the pontiff of Rome, 79. Henry II.'s quarrel with Becket and the Pope nearly dissolves the union of the Church with Rome, 91-119. Excommunications by Becket, 94. Account of this tyranny, and the law in relation to it, 95. Interdict, and deposition of kings, 97. Impostures recorded with regard to the death of Becket, 123. Jubilee in remembrance of him, 124. Usurpations of the Romish Church in the reign of King

Church—*continued.*

John, 128-140. The Papal system; its doctrine and practice, 141-160. Ritual of the Western Church, 144. Relics, *ib.* Purgatory, 154. Pilgrimage, *ib.* Masses for diseased persons, 155. Legends, *ib.* Corruptions which led to the reformation of the Romish Church, 153-160, 165. Rise of the Reformation, 160. Foreigners possessed of the benefices, 165. Church lands exempt from burdens, 166. Account of Wicliffe, 167. His attack on the Romish Church, 168. Fate of Lord Cobham, 179, *et seq.* His opinion on the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and the question of Transubstantiation; also that of the then Church of England on the same, 181, 183. Christian faith designated faith in Transubstantiation, 191. The Papal power in England overthrown by Henry VIII. and his successors, 197, *et seq.* The temporal lands of the Church in danger of confiscation, 198. Penalties of the Statute of *Præmunire*, 198, 202. The clergy acknowledge the supremacy of Henry VIII., 202. The translations of Scripture create a spirit in favour of Church reform, 203, 205, 208. Progress of public opinion causes an Act to restrain the clergy from persecutions, without presentments, 217. The question of the king's supremacy proves fatal to Fisher and More, 222, 223. Confiscation of the possessions of the lesser convents, 226, 227. Both houses of Convocation, their acts, 227. Articles and tenets of the Church set forth, just preceding the Reformation, 228. The convents produced advocates for the reformed religion, 227. Trials regarding Transubstantiation, 236. The Six Articles enumerated, 238, 261. The Romanists still possessing influence with Henry VIII., the pulpit became a place of controversy, 246. Images, and shrines, and pilgrimages discountenanced on the accession of Edward VI., 251. Licenses to preach, *ib.* Office of the communion, 253. Liturgy, *ib.* Communion table, 255. Laymen, 257. Chantries, free-chapels, and colleges conferred upon the king, 257. The bishops' lands protected by Edward VI., 258. Insurrection for a resumption of some old religious observances, 260-263. A Latin service or liturgy demanded, 260, 262. Episcopacy, 264. The Protestant bishops and ministers dispossessed of their sees and churches, 270. The martyrs in the time of Mary I., *ib.*, *et seq.* See ELIZABETH. Toleration, its principle first recognised, 344. Anabaptists burnt in the reign of Elizabeth, 345. Founders of the Eng-

Church—*continued.*

lish Church described, 346. Calvin, *ib.* The Nonconformists, 347, 349. The Puritans, 349, 354. James I.; state of religious parties, 353. He holds a conference at Hampton Court with the prelates, 355. Book of Common Prayer, *ib.* Next he hears the Puritans on the Articles of the Church, 356. The Lambeth Articles, *ib.* King James's speech on his supremacy, 362. The High Court of Commission, 363. Dissatisfaction of the Puritans, 365. Marriage of clergy declared lawful, *ib.* The gunpowder treason, 367. The Jesuit Garnet executed, 368. See PURITANS, 347-377. Influence of the pulpit, and ambition of the Puritans to preach, 372, 373. Lecturers established out of the Impropriation Purchase Fund, 373. The seoffment of these being declared illegal, and confiscation recurring, Archbishop Laud becomes thereby unpopular, 374. See LAUD, 374-398, 403. No papist to be executed for religion, 375. The clergy leavened with the sour spirit of Calvinism, 377. The Communion table, *ib.* The Star-chamber, 378. The new canons promulgated; give offence to the nation, 378, 384. Oath proposed to the clergy to maintain the doctrine and discipline of the Established Church, 378. Dr Manwaring's political sermon, for which he is fined and suspended from his duty, 379. The Established Church supported by the authority of Laud, 380. Religious malcontents in Scotland, 383. The Covenant, *ib.* A rebellion prepared by the Covenanters, 384. Bill against the bishops voting, 386. The High Commission Court abolished, 387. Puritans attack the Book of Common Prayer, communion table, chancel, and refuse to bow at the name of Jesus, 389. Episcopacy attacked, 392. Defence of the bishops, *ib.* They are by a bill deprived of their seats in parliament, 394. The "Assembly of Divines," 395. The clergy ejected from their livings, 399. Some perishing of hunger, some murdered, some imprisoned, 401. Confined in ships, *ib.* Some sold as slaves in Barbadoes, *ib.* Death of Laud, 423. The Liturgy superseded by a directory, 424. The Presbyterians, 426. The Erastians, *ib.* The Independents, 427. Charles I.'s commands to the prince relative to the Church, 431. Impropriations held by the Crown, 432. Alterations in the Book of Common Prayer made by the restored bishops, 436. Conferences between the prelates and the Presby-

Church—*continued*.

terians, 435, 436. Charles II. refers to Parliament to pass an Act for settling the Church affairs, 437. The Dissenters, 442. James II. takes overt steps towards re-establishing Popery, 443, 444. Declaration for liberty of conscience; abolishing tests, 445. Sancroft the primate's petition presented to the king, *ib.*, 446. The Seven Bishops; their interview with James, 446. He commands his Declaration to be published, 447. He summons the Seven Bishops on a charge of misdemeanour, and commits them to the Tower, 447, 448. Enthusiasm of the people in their cause, on the way to Westminster Hall, 449. Their petition declared to be libellous by the Chief Justice, but they are acquitted by the jury, 451. Exultation of the people, *ib.* Sancroft the primate shews the Dissenters their danger from Popery if it were to be re-established, 454. Interview of James and the bishops; attempt at conciliation, 454-456. James summons a parliament too late, 458. He flies, *ib.* The Revolution, 459, 460. Secularity of the Church, 461.

Churches, dilapidation of the Saxon, 71. Windows of painted glass required a grander architecture in the new edifices, *ib.* Reparation of, 381. The Puritans deface the churches, 398.

Clarendon, great council assembled at, near Salisbury, 77. Question before it; the royal customs, *i.e.* privileges, 78. Constitutions of Clarendon; their articles, *ib.* Their devisers excommunicated, 94.

Clarendon, Lord Chancellor, 435. His high character, 439.

Claudia, wife of Pudens, 6.

Clotworthy, Sir John, 418.

Cobham, Lord, his fate. *See* OLDCASTLE.

Cole, Dr, the bigoted, 312.

Coligny, the Admiral de, 336.

Commons, the, possessed but small authority in the parliament of Henry VIII., 222. Refuse supplies to Charles I., 370. *See* PARLIAMENT.

Confession and absolution, particulars regarding the Romish practice of, 155. Auricular confession, 238-253.

Convents. *See* MONASTERIES. Their landed possessions become an object of cupidity to the king, 198. Cranmer's advice to suppress them is followed, 225. Bill to suppress the minor convents, 226, 227. Willingness of some of the friars to surrender their convents, and re-enter the worldly life, 232.

Convocation, the lower house of, petition against those tenets, as errors, which

Convocation—*continued*.

are peculiarly the Protestant, 227. The upper house of convocation not unanimous in its views, 228. Articles of faith set forth by the clergy in Henry VIII.'s reign, *ib.*

Corneford, John, and others, the last auto-da-fé in Mary's reign, 320. Their prophetic words, 321.

Corporeal presence in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. *See* TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

Councils—of Bari, 67. Of Clermont, 142. Great Council of St Alban's, 134. In St Paul's, 135. Fourth Lateran Council, 140. Synod held as to Wicliffe, 169-171. Council of Constance consigns to the flames Jerome of Prague, John Huss, also the bones of Wicliffe, 192. Of Trent, 264, 337, 365. The conference at Hampton Court with the Puritans, 355-364. Synod of Dort, 366.

Courtney, Bishop of London, 169, 170. Is made primate, 172. Tries the reformer Wicliffe, 173.

Coverdale's Bible allowed to be read, 215. Completed and licensed, 235. Prohibited, 246. He returns from exile, 327.

Cox, Dr, preceptor to Edward VI., 249. Bishop, 327.

Cranmer, Archbishop, his character given, 202. Succeeds Warham as primate; desires to have the Scriptures translated, 215. His advice to Sir T. More, 220. Disputes with Lambert the martyr, 237. The Six Articles, enjoining celibacy as one of them, endanger the Archbishop, who had married the daughter of Osiander the reformer, 239. Cranmer supposed in danger from Henry, 240. The Romanists do not succeed against him, 243. Interview with Henry VIII. at Whitehall, 244. He is kept standing by the Privy Council at the door, 245. Produces the king's ring, and appeals to him, *ib.* Henry's prediction as to him, 246. Cranmer's renunciations of certain Popish doctrines on the accession of Edward, 250. He prepares a liturgy, 253, 262. His discretion in the establishment of the Reformed Church, 264. His severity to Joan Bocher, 265. Imprisoned at Oxford, 309. Is the chief object of Mary I.'s hatred, 303. The Romanists hated him as the chief promoter of the Reformation, 308. He prepares for the worst, 308. Attainted of treason for countersigning the young king's will, *ib.* Solicits and obtains a pardon, *ib.* With what design Mary I. pardons him on that score, *ib.* Condemned as a heretic with Latimer and Ridley, 309. A new

Cranmer, Archbishop—*continued*.

commission in his case deemed expedient, 309. Bishop Brooks' address to him to renounce his errors, *ib*. His learning and gentleness in his own defence, *ib*. Acknowledges his marriage and his children, *ib*. Cited to Rome, a mere matter of form, 310. Bonner's insolent exhibition of Cranmer's fallen condition, *ib*. Being condemned, appeals to a general council, and signs a recantation, *ib*. Death-sermon preached in St Mary's church, Oxford, by Dr Cole, 311. Mercy withheld, 312. Cole asserts that Cranmer is converted, 313. Cranmer's prayer, *ib*. He declares his genuine faith, 315. His regret for having recanted, and he holds forth to the flame his hand that signed the paper, *ib*, 316. His constancy and holy death, 316. His martyrdom the most injurious to Rome, *ib*.

Cromwell, Thomas, his character, 202. Friendly counsels to Sir T. More, 219, 220.

Cromwell, Oliver, about to emigrate; is detained by an embargo, 382. Rise of, 386. His government, 430. His remorse, and motives of conduct, *ib*. Anarchy after his death, *ib*.

Customs royal; Henry II. asserts his privileges and maintains the ancient *customs* of the realm, 78, 100, 101.

Cynegils, king of Wessex, receives baptism, 25.

D.

Danes, landing of, in England, 32. Their wild and fierce mythology, *ib*. The Scalds or Bardic historians, *ib*. Odin, and the giants of Scandinavian mythology, 33-36. Their piracy, and many fleets commanded by princes, 36. Voluntary death esteemed a means of future happiness, 37. Their sanguinary disposition, *ib*. Inhuman cruelties, *ib*. Torture, *ib*. Human sacrifices, 38. They become Christians in England, *ib*. And propagate the faith in Scandinavia, *ib*. Pillage the monasteries, 43. They burn the libraries of the monks, *ib*. Dynasty of Canute and its results, 57. New invasion; they put the Archbishop of Canterbury to death, *ib*. They nevertheless conform to the Anglican Church, *ib*. Their habits of excess imitated by the English, *ib*.

Darcy, Lord, behaved for engaging in the northern rebellion against Henry VIII., 230-232.

David, St, his reported visions at Glastonbury, 45.

Deans, the Urban and Rural, 42.

Deira, province of, ecclesiastical anecdote, 11. Its celebrated king Edwin, 16-24.

Deluge, traditions of the, 9.

Dering, Sir Edward, portrait of, 386. His bill against the vote of bishops in Parliament, *ib*. He defends the Church, 389, 401. Prints his speeches, 401. His book burnt, and he is expelled the House, 402. His misfortunes, 403.

Directory of the Puritans, 424, 425.

Dissenters, the Nonconformists assume this name, 442.

Divorce, canon against, 40.

Dobs, Sir Richard, Lord Mayor, 294.

Doctrine of Augustine, 14, 31.

Dominic, St, institutes his monastic order, 162. Preaches the crusade against the Albigenses, *ib*. Legends of the Dominican monks, 163. Adopted by the Virgin Mary, *ib*. Theory of dispensations, 164.

Dominicans, their zeal in praise of their institutor, 163. Their influence over men's minds, 164.

Dort, Synod of the Protestants at, 366, 374.

Douay, College of Jesuits, founded by Cardinal Allen, 337. Transplanted to Rheims, 338.

Druids, their belief and doctrine, 2. Their mythi, 3. Their revenues by prophesying, *ib*. Sacred fire, *ib*. The mistletoe, 4. Magic and abominations, *ib*. Burnings, *ib*. Final decline of their superstition, 10. Resort to excommunication to enforce their authority, *ib*.

Dunstan, his family, 44. Anecdotes of his childhood, *ib*. Legend regarding him at Glastonbury, 45. Is in favour with Athelstan, 46. Musical misadventure, *ib*. He becomes a monk at Glastonbury, 47. He takes the devil by the nose, *ib*. Is appointed by Edmund to be the abbot, 48. His reform of church discipline, 50. Enforces celibacy, *ib*. In favour with Edred, *ib*. His quarrel with King Edwy, 51. Is banished, and the devil chuckles at the confiscation of his effects at Glastonbury, *ib*. Retires to Ghent, *ib*. Triumphant return, 52. Odo's complaisance with regard to Dunstan's consecration, *ib*. Bishop of London, 53. When primate, supports the pretensions of the Benedictine monks to be the officiating ministers, *ib*. Miracles, *ib*. His council, and the catastrophe at Calne, the flooring giving way, 54. His death, 55. Reputed sanctity, *ib*. In character a monk, 56. Barefaced imposture, *ib*.

Dutch, republic, establishment of the, 374.

E

- Eadbald, king of Kent, 18. He forbids the Saxon idolatry, 19.
- East, the philosophy of the Persians, 151.
- Easter, mythological origin of the word, 10.
- Ecclesiastical government in the Saxon times, 42. Reform of the regular and secular clergy promoted by Dunstan, 49. Just administration of the Church by Lanfranc, 62. *See* CHURCH.
- Edgar chosen by the Northumbrian insurgents in place of King Edwy, who is dethroned, 52. His compact with the monastic party, 54. On his death the queen takes part with the secular clergy, *ib.*
- Edmund succeeds his brother Athelstan, 48. Makes Dunstan abbot of Glastonbury, *ib.*
- Edred succeeds King Edmund, and favours Dunstan, 48. His premature death, 51.
- Edward III. refuses to do homage to Urban V., 167. Controversy between Wicliffe and the See of Rome consequent on the Pope's threats, 166, 167.
- Edward VI. succeeds his father at nine years of age, 249. His uncle Seymour protector, 250. Reproves his courtiers respecting Episcopal lands, 258. Insurrection in Devonshire, 260-262. The religious malcontents originate prophecies against the king and nobility, 262. Somerset the protector succeeded by Northumberland, 263. The young monarch reluctant to sign the warrant against Joan Bocher, 265. His dialogue with Bishop Ridley; he founds Christ's Hospital, 266. Also St Thomas's, St Bartholomew's, and Bridewell, *ib.* His death, 267.
- Edwin, king of Deira (of the Northumbrians), 16. Early anecdotes of, 17, 19. Espouses Edilburga, a Christian princess, 19. He permits Paulinus to accompany the queen to Northumberland, 20. He converses with this great missionary, and forbears from sacrifices to idols, *ib.* Is exhorted by Pope Boniface by letter, 21. Is extraordinarily converted by Paulinus, and proposes the adoption of Christianity to his council, 22, 23. Is baptized together with his people, 23. Slain in battle; and his Northumbrians for a time compelled to return to paganism, 24.
- Edwy, King, 51. His queen Elgiva was his relation, *ib.* Offence given by the young monarch to Dunstan, *ib.* Rudely assailed by that abbot, he disgraces and banishes him, *ib.* The king and his young queen become victims to the ambition of the haughty

Edwy, King—*continued.*

- churchmen Odo and Dunstan, 52. His violent death, *ib.*
- Elfin, Archbishop of Canterbury, 53. Perishes in the Alps, *ib.*
- Elgiva, story of this ill-fated queen, 51, *et seq.*
- Elizabeth, prayer of Latimer for the princess, 300. Rejoicings at her accession, made by the people on the evening of Mary's decease, 321. Cecil, her principal secretary, 322. Her public entry into London, *ib.* Her treatment, in custody at Woodstock, *ib.* She proceeds temperately in establishing the Reformed Church, 324. She deprives the turbulent bishops, and appoints new, 326. She refuses to acknowledge the authority of Rome, *ib.* Danger to the REFORMATION from the Romanists, 329. They, however, submit to the queen's measures, *ib.* They acknowledge the queen's SUPREMACY, and thus keep their churches, *ib.* The Protestant ministers thereby kept out of cures, *ib.* Letter of Elizabeth, containing advice to Bonner and the intolerant churchmen, 330. She does not permit the nuncio of Pius IV. to land, 332. The Reformation divided Europe in religion, *ib.* Imprisonment of Mary Queen of Scots by Elizabeth impolitic, 333. Fear of sinister resolves on the part of Mary and the Guise family, *ib.* Insurrection in the North of England aided by Scotch papists, suppressed, 334. Elizabeth is excommunicated by Pius V., *ib.* Oath of Supremacy, 335. She is requested to give a meeting to Catharine de Medicis and declines, 336. Prayers in England for the persecuted; also even for persecutors, *ib.* Conspiracies to be feared from the Jesuits, 338. The queen obliged to be severe against the propagandists of the bull of Pius V., 340. The executions on that score, *ib.* Elizabeth's duplicity with regard to Mary of Scotland, 342. Mary beheaded, *ib.* Two English papists betray fortresses in the Low Countries, 343. Sir William Stanley, *ib.* The *invincible* Armada, *ib.* Intention, success being presumed, to consign Elizabeth to the Pope's care, *ib.* The English preparations to resist, *ib.* Anabaptists delivered to the flames, 345. Leicester protects the Puritans, 347. The queen fears these innovators in religion more than the Romanists, 349. The clergy, *ib.* Powers of the High Court of Commission, 351, 363. Conformity essential to the stability of a Church, 352. Last years of her reign, 353.

Ely, President of St John's, urges Cranmer to repentance, 316.

ENGLAND; the Angles conquer Britain, 9. Their idolatry and manners, *ib.* Their objects of worship enumerated, 10. History of their conversion to Christianity by Augustine and Paulinus, 11-25. Causes of the unvarying success of these establishers of the Christian faith, 25-32. Condition of the island on the invasion by the Northmen and their warlike princes, 27. Slavery and serfship, *ib.* Learning introduced as a consequence of the Christian religion, 28. Religious fervour evidenced by kings and people, 30. Ecclesiastical institutions under the Heptarchy, 39. Introduction of tithes; their nature, *ib.*, 40. State of learning, 40, 43, 58. Moral influences of the Danes' intemperance, 57. Depravity, *ib.* Conducive to the success of William of Normandy, 58. The conqueror displaces all Saxon priests from the ministry, *ib.* Archbishop Lanfranc, 59. John made king, on the principle that the crown was elective, 127. Events of his reign, 128-138. The barons force John to sign Magna Charta, 138. Benefits of this charter acceptable at the time to the English, *ib.* Italian priests and Lombard usurers in England, 165. Statute of mortmain, 166. Edward II., 167. John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, 169. Reign of Richard II., *ib.* The civil wars gave some respite from religious persecution, 196. Henry VII.'s reign, *ib.* Affairs of the Church, and severity of persecution in the reign of Henry VIII., 197-249. The truly pious reign of King Edward VI., 249-267. The PERSECUTION in the reign of Mary I., 267-321. Elizabeth confirms the REFORMATION, in her prosperous reign, 322-353. James I.'s religious principles, 353, *et seq.* Condition of the Church in the time of Charles I., 370-430. Cromwell relieves the country from Presbyterian intolerance, *ib.* New troubles of religion in the reigns of Charles II. and James II., 431-457. The REVOLUTION carried for the preservation of the Protestant Established Church, 459-461.

Eorpwald, king of East Anglia, embraces Christianity, 24.

Eostre, this goddess the same as As-tarte, 10.

Episcopacy established in the Reformed Church, 264. Objected to by the Non-conformists and Puritans, 348. Temporalities restored by James I. to the bishops, 383. Bills in Parliament to abolish Episcopacy, 386.

Erasmus, extract from, 197. His ver-

Erasmus—*continued.*

sion of the New Testament, 203.

Friendship for Sir T. More, 210.

Erastians, the sect called, 426.

Ethelbert, king of Kent, espouses Bertha, 13. His reception of Augustine,

14. His religious toleration and conversion, 15. His authority, 16. He builds a church in London, *ib.*

Ethelfrith, king of Bernicia, 16. Is slain in battle, 18.

Ethelwolf, father of Alfred, establishes tithes, 40.

Eucharist, the; doctrine of transubstantiation, 157, *et seq.* The sacrament explained, 176.

Excommunication by the Pope and his legates; its terms explained, 94, 95. Nature of an interdict, 97.

F.

Falkland, Lord, 386.

Fanatics, their severities exercised against themselves, 153. Absurd modes of aspiring to be saints, *ib.*

Farrer, Bishop, assists Bradford in his argument, 289. Suffers at Carmarthen, 290.

Fawkes, Guy, his treason prompted by fanaticism, 367.

Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambray, 143.

Ferdinand, king of Arragon, demands that the Earl of Warwick should be put to death, 201.

Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, implicated in misprision of treason, 218. He is executed, 223, 312.

Fitz-Peter, Geoffrey, earl of Essex, 135.

Fitzurse concerned in the murder of Thomas à Becket, 117. H.s advice to fly disdained by that primate, 119. He smites the prelate, *ib.*

Flanders, war for independence and religion in the Low Countries, 342. The republic of Holland, 374.

Fox, John, quotation from, 192. His son and biographer, 235. Fox's account of Hooper, 274, 278. Of Latimer, 300. Of Gardiner, *ib.* Of Cranmer, 312. The Martyrologist's letter to Elizabeth against burning the Anabaptists, 345. His opinions, 347.

France, Louis VII., enmity to Henry II. of England, 88-102. Philippe Auguste, 127. Henri II.; dissension with Spain, and hostile to Elizabeth, 333. Charles IX.; massacre of St Bartholomew, 336. Assassination of Henri III., 367.

Francis d'Assise, St, stays the progress of the Reformation, 161. His reputed conformity to the holy living of our Saviour, 163.

Franciscans; institution of the order of

Franciscan—*continued*.

- Friars Minor, 161. Luxury of the White Friars, 162. Number of friars and nuns calculated, *ib*. They offend the Pope, who establishes the Dominicans in opposition to them, 165. The Observant Franciscans suppressed by Henry VIII., 225.
- Frith, John, a disciple of Tindal, 211. Is determined to preach a reformation, *ib*. His Treatise upon Transubstantiation, 212.
- Fuller, quotations from, 7, 31, 192, 195, 196, 228; 250, 254, 259, 302, 331, 353, 365.

G.

- Gardiner, Stephen, severity of Bishop, 214. Writes in vindication of King Henry VIII., 224. Family he descended from, 235. Physiognomy and character, *ib*. His policy, *ib*, 236. Instigator of the trial of Lambert, 237. Tries Anne Askew, who is condemned, 242. Out of favour with Henry, 246. Deprived of his see, 254. Restored, and tries the Protestants, 272, 279. His fear of Elizabeth, 300. His character, *ib*. Dies, 301. His charity partial, 319.
- Garnet, a Jesuit, executed for the Gunpowder Plot, 368.
- Gaunt, John of, protects the reformer Wicliffe from the vengeance of the prelaty, 169.
- Geneva, Church of, 264, 346, 349. Discipline of, 374.
- Germany, struggle between the emperors and the Roman pontiffs for supremacy, 65. Rival emperors set up, *ib*. The emperor writes to Elizabeth to restore the deprived clergy, 331.
- Ghosts said to visit this sublunary scene, 156.
- Giants, legends regarding them, in the ancient religion of the North, 33.
- Giles, St, executions of Lollards, in Ficket-field near, 190.
- Glastonbury, first church in Britain founded at, 6. Destruction of the abbey, 7. Account of St Dunstan, 44. Site of the first church, reputed such, *ib*. Legends of Dunstan explained, 45, 47. St Dunstan, abbot, 48. Affray respecting the office and liturgy proposed by Thurstan the Norman abbot, 62. At the Reformation, the abbey is converted into a weaver's workshop, 259. Its manuscripts destroyed, *ib*.
- Globe lands, nature and extent of, 41.
- God, the holy name of, 10. The three dispensations, that of the Father, of the Son, and that of the Holy Spirit, explained, 164.

- Gods, false, of the Druids, 3.
- Godmundham; the great heathen temple destroyed by King Edwin, 23.
- Gothic conquests; results described, 10.
- Grafton, Richard, causes Coverdale's Bible to be printed, 235.
- Gregory the Great witnesses the sale of Anglo-Saxon slaves at Rome, 11. His intended apostleship to Britain, 12. Is chosen pope, *ib*. He commissions St Augustine to England, *ib*, 31, *note*.
- Gregory VII. (Hildebrand) demands that William I. should do fealty to him for his crown, 61. His ambition, 63. Sanctity and visions or dreams, *ib*. Disclaims all temporal authority over the Romish Church, *ib*. Defends the possessions and wealth of the Church against royal power, 64. A rival pope, 65. His principles, 143. He hesitates before he sanctions the doctrine of transubstantiation, 157.
- Grey, Lady Jane, appointed by Edward VI. to be his successor on the throne, 267. Her death, *ib*.
- Grindal, Bishop, 347.
- Grotius, his advice to Laud, 405.
- Guelphs and Ghibellines, their fierce contests, 65.
- Guise, the duke de, related to, and a supporter of, Mary Queen of Scotland, 333, 336.

H.

- Hacket, Dr, 388.
- Hale, Sir Matthew, counsel to Archbishop Laud, 414.
- Hampden, John, desirous to emigrate with Cromwell and Pym, 382, 386. Accuses Laud, 403.
- Harpsfield, Archdeacon of Canterbury, his cruelty, 321.
- Haslerig, Sir Arthur, 386, 429.
- Hastings, battle of, 58.
- Heath, Bishop, 324, 325, 330.
- Heathenism and idolatry of Rome introduced into Britain, 5. Remnants of Druidical and Roman, 9. Demigods of Paganism, 146. Resemblances of Popery to, 149.
- Henry I. grants a charter of liberties, 68. Requires homage from Anselm for his see, *ib*. Reference to Pope Urban, *ib*. The pontiff's address to Henry, *ib*. The king insists on receiving homage from prelates, 69.
- Henry II. raises Becket to the see of Canterbury, 73. He supports Alexander III. as Pope, 74. Causes of quarrel with the Primate, 75, 76. Henry refers the accommodation of the disputes to the great council at Clarendon, 77. He demands observance of the royal customs by the prelates, 78. His courtiers entreat Becket to sub-

Henry II.—*continued.*

mit, 78. Firmness of Henry, and its successful result, *ib.* Council at Northampton, 81. He fines the archbishop in £500, *ib.* Demands money from Becket as warden of his castles, and payment of a loan, 82; also his accounts as chancellor, *ib.*, 103. His perplexity at the firm countenance shewn by Becket, 86. Brings him to trial for treason, *ib.* Sends ambassadors to Pope Alexander III., 88. The Pope's reply, 89. The king confiscates the chattels of Becket and his partisans, 91. Threatened with excommunication by Becket as the Pope's legate, 96. He dreads the promulgation of an interdict; measures to prevent it, 97. His inconsiderate boast of having bought the favour of Rome, 100. He proposes terms with the Holy See, *ib.* Stipulates for the integrity of his royal customs, *ib.* Makes peace with Louis VII., 101. Interview between both monarchs and Becket, *ib.* His dignity and talent in maintaining his cause against Becket's pride and obstinacy, *ib.* The Church in England insists that Henry shall repay to Becket and his adherents all confiscations and fines, 103. Pope Alexander supports Becket's demand of restitution of property, *ib.* Henry proffers fresh terms to the Roman pontiff, 104. The two *nuncios* exhort Henry to restore the exiled archbishop to favour, 105. He remains intrepid, *ib.* Causes his eldest son to be crowned as a measure of precaution, 106. His sincerity in the meeting with Becket and Louis at Frettevalle, 108. The king's mild and magnanimous deportment, 109. The king's sickness, 111. Prince Henry now styled the young king, 115. Henry the father king, 116. Henry asks advice of his prelates, *ib.* Their answer, *ib.* His incautious expressions misconstrued, *ib.* The king's remorse upon the murder of Becket, committed by De Tracy and Fitzurse, 120. His unfeigned penitence, *ib.* Advantage taken by the Pope and the king of France of this untoward event, 121. Terms of reconciliation favourable to Henry, 122. His penance and repentance at the shrine of Becket, 125. His death, 126.

Henry III.; state of the church in England, 165. The Lombards enriched by excessive usury, *ib.*

Henry IV.; persecution of the Lollards, 174, *et seq.* Question of the convent lands, 193.

Henry V.; the prince offers pardon to Badby, 177. He leaves Lord Cobham

Henry V.—*continued.*

to the tender mercies of the primate Arundel, 180. Informed that the Lollards were plotting against his life, 190. Bill proposed for seizing conventual lands, 198, 225.

Henry VII.; persecution of the Lollards resumed in his reign, 196. Affairs of the Church in this reign, 198.

Henry VIII.; state of the kingdom at his accession, 199. His abilities, *ib.* Splendour of his court, *ib.* The patron of letters, *ib.* His minister Wolsey, *ib.* His controversy with Luther obtains for him the title of Defender of the Faith, 200. Anecdote of his court-fool, *ib.* Queen Catharine, account of, 200, *et seq.* Anne Boleyn, the king's love for, 201. Solicits a dispensation to have two wives, *ib.* Divorced from Catharine, 202. Persecutions and atrocities in the name of religion, *ib.* Is persuaded by Cromwell to assert his supremacy over the Church, in his dominions, *ib.* He enjoins the placing the Bible, both Latin and English, in churches, 215. This change respecting the use of the Scripture is promoted by Cramer, and the Queen Anne Boleyn, *ib.* Her marriage one cause of the advance of the Reformation, 216. A nun executed for feigning revelations of Henry's death, 217. Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, implicated, 218. Sir T. More also accused of communicating with the nun, *ib.* Carthusians executed for denying the king's supremacy, 221. The king is all-powerful in the Parliament, 222. Puts Sir T. More to death, 223. Henry not originally cruel and vindictive, 221. Capricious, familiar with his favourites; but an unsafe master, 219. He seizes upon abbey lands and convents, 224–227. His depravation and ferocity manifested in the beheading Anne Boleyn, and next day espousing Jane Seymour, 227. He suppresses, in person, an insurrection relating to certain sacraments, 229. He reasons and argues, but nevertheless puts the ringleaders to death, *ib.* Great rebellion in the north of England, 229–232. The king's affairs become perilous, 230. He puts Robert Aske and the Lord Darcy to death, 232. He suppresses the great monasteries, *ib.* Erects a few additional bishoprics with part of the confiscations, *ib.* Dissipates the bulk of the forfeited possessions of the abbots, by grants, and gambles with the monastic wealth, 233. The kingdom being under interdict, and himself cited to Rome as a heretic, Henry sets forth a declaration against the

Henry VIII.—*continued.*

Holy See, 234. Evinces some regard for Cranmer, 238. Romanists (not Papists) had still influence with the king, 240. Death of his queen Katharine Howard, *ib.* His marriage with Katharine Parr, widow of Lord Latimer, *ib.* The king grown older, still a persecutor, *ib.* Anne Askew consigned to the flames, 242. The king supposed to desire to implicate his queen, Katharine Parr, in a charge of heresy, 240, 243. Permits the enemies of Cranmer to cite him to answer charges, 244. Sends for him to a private interview; their interesting dialogue, *ib.* Henry rebukes his council, 245. And protects Cranmer during his own life, *ib.* He sends for Cranmer on his death-bed, 247. Death of Henry, *ib.* His will; treats of his religious sentiments, and past life, *ib.* It orders money to the poor at his funeral, to pray for his soul, *ib.* Odious to posterity, 243. His more favourable qualities, *ib.* His disposition and learning, 248, 249.

Heptarchy, its kings descended from Odin, 10. Christianity disappears for a century, *ib.*

Hertha, goddess of the Saxons, 10.

Hesiod, "Theogony" of, and poems of Homer, compared with Bardic mythology and history, 33-39.

Hewet, Andrew, burnt, 214.

Hildebrand. See GREGORY VII.

Hoby, Sir Philip, 258.

Holinshed, quotation from, 322.

Holy-days, certain festivals, abolished, 228, 251, 425.

Holyman, Bishop of Bristol, 294.

Hooker, quotation from, 348.

Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, inclined to Calvinistic doctrines, 254. Committed to the Fleet prison for non-conformity, 255. He substitutes the communion table for an altar, *ib.* Fox's testimony of his merit, 274-278. His examination by Gardiner and Tonstall, 274. His marriage, *ib.* His constancy in a lingering martyrdom, 279.

Horsea, Hugh of, a monk, called the Ill-clerk, 119.

Howard, Katharine, queen of Henry VIII., beheaded, 240. Fall of the Howard family, 246.

Huguenots, Hugonots, or Protestants of France, persecution, 336. Massacre of them on St Bartholomew's day general throughout France, *ib.*

Huss, his fortitude in his martyrdom, 174, 191.

I.

Icolmkill, monastery in the Hebrides,

Icolmkill—*continued.*

its importance in the history of the establishment of religion, 25.

Idols of the Anglo-Saxons, 9.

Images, doctrines regarding, 228. Injunctions in England against them, and many destroyed, 251.

Ina, King, sends to Athens for Greek professors, 42. Founder of Glastonbury church, 44.

Independents, methodical system of the, 426, 437.

Infallibility of the Pope, 160, 168.

Innocent III. chooses Cardinal de Langton to be Archbishop of Canterbury, 128. His correspondence with King John, 129. Deposes King John; his subsequent policy, 131, 138. His legate Pandulph, 138, *et seq.* John swears liege-homage to him, 132. The Pope supports John's authority, 136. His bull disregarded by the English barons, 137. He declares transubstantiation a tenet necessary to salvation, 157.

Inquisition established by the Dominicans, 165. Inquisitors in England, 178. Commissioners of inquisition, 319.

Interdict by the Church of Rome; its force and severity, 97. Annoyance to the people, 130-133, 234.

Ireland, Church of, 381.

Iona, island of, west of Scotland, 25.

Islip, Simon de, Archbishop of Canterbury, 167.

J.

James I.; state of religious parties at his accession, 353. His prudence, 354. Conference at Hampton Court, on the prayer book, confirmation, baptism, &c.; the king's principles, 355, 356, 357. The king's commands in matters of religion, 364. His Treatise on Demonology, 366. A Socinian and a fanatic burnt, 367. James resolves never to make another martyr, *ib.* His principles of toleration, *ib.* The Gunpowder plot, *ib.* State in which James left the Church, 370.

James II.; the Duke of York converted to the Romish faith, 440. State of religious parties on his accession, 441. James's measures, 443. He appoints a commission to punish ecclesiastical offences, 444. The king appoints a Papist as Dean of Christ Church, and the clergy steadily resist these proceedings of James, 445. The Declaration of liberty of conscience, *ib.* It abolished all tests, *ib.* Sancroft summons the prelates to meet him, *ib.* The king causes the Seven Bishops to be tried for a petition to him, as libel-

James II.—*continued.*

- lous, 447-451. His subsequent negotiations with the prelates, 454, 455. The Revolution, and elevation of William and Mary to the throne, 458. The Church and the Constitution established by that event, 461.
- Jefferies, Judge, 444.
- Jesuits, college of, established by Allen at Douay, 337. Their influence, 333. Their institutions and rules, eminently adapted to acquire power, *ib.* They establish themselves in distant lands, and in America, 339. They implicitly obey the Pope, *ib.* Their vows, *ib.* They establish colleges at Douay, Rome, Valladolid, Seville, St Omer's, Madrid, Louvain, Liege, Ghent, and Rheims, 338. If ambitious of martyrdom, they were missioned to Japan, where a slow fire was the expected doom, 339; others were sent to England to form conspiracies, *ib.* Campian the Jesuit, 340. The Jesuit Garnet executed, 363.
- John of Oxford excommunicated, 94. Obtains absolution; his abilities, and success with the Pope, 98, 114.
- John, king of England, elected by the clergy, 127. Is involved in dispute with Innocent III. respecting D. Langton and his competitors, 128. His obstinacy under an interdict, 131. His tyranny, *ib.* He is declared by the Pope to be deposed, and the kingdom offered to Philippe Auguste, *ib.* His offer to a Moorish prince of Spain, 132. He delivers his crown to Cardinal Pandulph, and after five days receives it as from the see of Rome, 133. His army refuse to embark for France with the king, 134. He puts to sea with his household officers, *ib.* He returns from Jersey in anger against his barons, 135. He is supported by Pope Innocent, 136. Pandulph praises and encourages him, *ib.* He meets his barons in London, 137. Is required to confirm the charter of Henry I., *ib.* He fortifies his castles, *ib.* The barons having attempted Northampton, are received by the people in London, 138. He is compelled by the barons to sign Magna Charta, *ib.*
- Joye, George, version of part of the Scriptures, 215.
- K.**
- Keltic nations, 32. Their priests, 95.
- Ken, bishop of Bath and Wells, 446.
- Kingston, Sir Anthony, his persuasions to Bishop Hooper, 276.
- Kirk-scot, nature of this provision for the clergy, 40.
- Kitchen, Bishop of Llandaff, conforms to the Established Church, 326.
- Knewstubs, the Puritan, objects to the baptismal service, surplice, &c., 361, 364.
- Knox, John, when residing in England, 264. A disciple of Calvin, 349. His letter to Mary of Scots, 362.
- L.**
- Lambert, John, avows the religious tenets of Bilney and Frith, 236. Commits his arguments against the doctrine of transubstantiation to writing, *ib.* Is tried by Henry VIII. in person, 237. Ordered to argue the question with Cranmer and the bishops, *ib.* The king denies him mercy, *ib.* His cruel execution, *ib.*
- Lambeth Articles, the, sanctioned by Archbishop Whitgift, 356.
- Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, his learning and talent, 59. Defends the rights of the clergy, 61. Sole justiciary in William I.'s absence, *ib.* He rebuilds the cathedral of Canterbury, 62. His alms, and his integrity, *ib.* Causes the cessation of sale of slaves, *ib.* Removes the bishops' sees from decayed cities, *ib.* Establishes a uniform liturgy, *ib.* Restores letters, *ib.* Honours the memory of Dunstan; permits imposture respecting some miracles, 63. Predicts the accession of Anselm to the primacy, *ib.*
- Langham, Simon, primate, 167.
- Langton, Stephen de, elected by the Pope, Innocent III., to the see of Canterbury, 128. King John elects the Bishop of Norwich, *ib.* Langton arrives, from Pontigny, in England; his policy, 134. He threatens all adherents of John, 135. Appeals against Pandulph to Pope Innocent III., 136. He contemplates the Great Charter, 137. Success of his measures, 138. Contributes, by his patriotic spirit to the liberties of England, 133, 140.
- Latimer, the pious, made Bishop of Worcester, at the instance of Anne Boleyn, 216. He entreats the king that certain monasteries in each shire might be converted into establishments for learning, 232. On publication of the Six Articles, he resigns his see, and is imprisoned, 238. Step-lords, who called by him, 260. Is one of the bishops in prison at Oxford, 285. Anecdote when in the Tower, 295. His dress on his trial, *ib.* His reply to Bishop White, 296. Latimer prepares for death, 299. His cheerfulness and courage, 300. His death, *ib.*

- Latin language, in Britain, 10. Employed in ecclesiastical writings, 29. The use of Latin in the church offices, required by the people, 261.
- Laud, animosity against the archbishop, how first excited, 374. His zeal for and devotion to the principles of the Reformation, 376. His charitable temper towards the Romanists, *ib.* True piety of Charles I. and the primate, 376. Orders the communion-table to be railed in in the chancel, 377. The condemnations in the Star-chamber increase his unpopularity, 378. The cloud impending over Laud, 380. His diary, *ib.* His munificence to the University of Oxford, 381. Causes the king to restore to the Church of Ireland the impropriations vested in the crown, *ib.* He enforces discipline, and repairs the churches, *ib.* Maintains the observance of the rubric, *ib.* His enemies, 382. Fined by the Puritans, 394. Taken in custody by the Parliament's authority, 403. Articles against him, *ib.* Sent to the Tower, 405. He sees Lord Strafford led to execution, 406. His revenues seized, 407. His diary, &c., seized by Prynne, *ib.* His trial, 408. His defence, 410. His firm behaviour, 413. Speaks in his own vindication, 414. He produces a pardon from Charles I., but the Parliament affirms that a judgment of Parliament could not be met by the royal clemency, 417. His dying address, 418. Declares his innocence, 419. His prayer in the hour of death, 420. Concourse at his burial, 423.
- Laurentius, successor of St Augustine, 18.
- Lay impropriations, 373. Fund to repurchase them applied to lectureships, *ib.* New confiscation, 373, 432.
- Laymen, church preferments bestowed upon, 257.
- Leaf, John, an apprentice, condemned to the stake, 289.
- Legends regarding Britain, 6.
- Leicester, earl of, favourite of Elizabeth, 289.
- Levellers, and Fifth Monarchy Men, 437. They proclaim King Jesus, *ib.* A plot frustrated, 441.
- Libraries—at Canterbury, 40. MSS. destroyed by the Danes, 43. Of the abbey destroyed at the Reformation; history and classical learning supposed to have suffered, 257, 259.
- Lindisfarn, Isle of, 25.
- Lingard, Dr., quotation from, 189, *note.*
- Liturgy, compiled by Bishop Osmund and established by the authority of Lanfranc, 62. The Church Liturgy, prepared by Craumer, 253. The people
- Liturgy—*continued.*
- ple wished it to continue in Latin, 262. The Litany, 329. Alterations approved of by James I., 362. Suppressed by the Parliament, 424. Confirmed by Charles II., 435.
- Lloyd, Bishop of St Asaph, 446.
- Loke, fable regarding him and his offspring, 35.
- Lollards, followers of the tenets and principles of Wicliffe, 172. Dangerous in that era, 174. They are condemned to the stake, 175, *et seq.* Rumoured designs of insurrection, 190. Statute against them, 191.
- Lombards in England, their usury, 165.
- London, St Paul's church founded, 16.
- Bishop Dunstan, 53. Tumult upon Wicliffe appearing before a synod in St Paul's, 169. The city is apostrophised by Ridley, in his affecting leave-taking, 293. The fire of London predicted to the day, 441. The papists accused of it, *ib.*
- Louis VII. protects and receives the exiled Becket, 88, *et seq.*, 97. His enmity to Henry II., and subservience to Rome, 99. Peace with England, 101. His policy, and perhaps candour, displayed in the interviews with Becket and the English king, 102, 103.
- Louis XIV. expected to restore the Romish religion in England by his arms, 443.
- Ludlow, Parliamentary general, 441.
- Luther, his principles of religious liberty, whence derived, 200. His conference with Tindal, 203. A Romanist bishop's mention of him, 324.
- Lucius, British king, baptized, 6.

M.

- Magna Charta, causes which conducted to it, 133. Struggle against the royal authority, 137. It is sealed at Runnymede, near Egham, 138. Its provisions, *ib.* Great satisfaction of the people, 139.
- Malmsbury, William of, 259.
- Manes, philosophy of, 151.
- Manichean school, St Augustine partook in its views, 151. Its errors and corruptions, 224.
- Manse, hospitalities of the priests', 42.
- Manwaring, Dr, suspended from his church ministry, 379. He is rewarded by Charles I. with the bishopric of St David's, *ib.*
- Marriages of priests annulled, 69; and celibacy strictly enforced, 70. Tax imposed by Henry I., *ib.* One cause of condemnation to the stake, 272, 280, 304, 309. Declared lawful, 265.

- Martyrs—British, 7, 8. Among the later English are:—William Sautre, 175. John Badby, 177. [Huss, John, 174. Jerome of Prague,] Lord Cobham, 190. Sir Roger Acton, *ib.* Joan Boughton, 196. Lady Young, *ib.* William Tyllsworth, *ib.* John Scrivener, 197. Thomas Bilney, 203. James Bainham, 206. John Frith, 211–214. Andrew Hewet, 214. Tindal, 215: John Lambert, 236–238. Anne Askew, 240–243. John Rogers, first martyr under the Marian persecution, 270. Laurence Saunders, *ib.* Bishop Hooper, 274–279. Dr Rowland Taylor, 279–285. John Bradford, 281–290. John Leaf suffers with Bradford, 289. Bishop Farrer, 290. Bishops Ridley and Latimer, 290–300. Archdeacon Philpot, 289–308. Whittle, a priest, 304. Cranmer, 285–316. Julius Palmer, 317. George Tankerfield, *ib.* Robert Smith, 318, *note.* George Roper, 318. Rawlins White, *ib.* John Cornesford, 320.
- Mary, the lady, threatened by Henry VIII., 224. Her accession as Mary I., 267. Re-establishment of popery, and religious persecutions during her reign, 268, *et seq.* Her marriage with Philip II., 269. Her malignity against Cranmer, 303. Its origin surmised, 311. Her death described, 320. Joy of the people testified, 321. Her funeral sermon, 323.
- Mary, Queen of Scots, married to the Dauphin, afterwards Francis II., 333. The Dauphin's claim to England in right of Mary, *ib.* She is left a widow, *ib.* Flying from Scotland, she is incarcerated by her cousin Elizabeth, and is formidable as an object of hope to the Catholic malcontents, *ib.* Her pretensions to the English crown rest on the question of Elizabeth's legitimacy, *ib.* Dangers from Mary of a new religious persecution, *ib.* Conspiracies in her favour, 341. Prophetic speech as to her death by the king of France, *ib.* Elizabeth's duplicity; Mary beheaded, 342.
- Mary II.; letter from the Princess of Orange to Dr Sancroft, 444. The deposition of James II.; and the English Revolution, 457–461.
- Masses for the dead, 155. Case of Henry VIII.'s will, 252. Private masses, so lucrative, abolished, *ib.*
- Matilda, Empress, hostile to the promotion of Becket, 74.
- Mellitus, early bishop of London, 18. He sails with Justus to France, *ib.*
- Mendicant Friars, the, 164. The rule of the order relaxed, *ib.*
- Merits, monkish doctrine of, 151.
- Mission, Christian, to England, 13. Zeal of Jesuit missionaries, 337, *et seq.*
- Mistletoe, Druidical rites regarding the, 4.
- Monachism early in Britain, 8. Supported by Dunstan, 49. Encouraged by Archbishop Lanfranc, 60. Era of the institution of the White Friars and Black Friars, 161–165. Ill-regarded at Oxford, 166.
- Monasteries and monks, special objects of plunder to the Danes, 43. The monks put to the sword, *ib.* The rule and discipline of abbeys, 45. Increase of religious houses; their ill effect felt, 166. The convent lands laid claim to by the state, 198. Carthusians, several executed for denying the supremacy of Henry VIII., 221. Dissolution of the monasteries by Henry, 224. In what degree their preservation might have been useful, 225. Bill for seizing the possessions of the lesser convents, 226. The monks and nuns accused of bad morals, a chief plea for their impoverishment, and confiscation, *ib.* Twenty-six abbots had votes in Parliament, *ib.* The fate of the aged monks demanded some pity for their unexpected destitution, 227. Their possessions dispersed by grant, sale, and exchange, *ib.* Abbots executed for the rebellion on account of religion, 232. Henry VIII. immediately confiscates and suppresses the remainder of the monasteries, *ib.* Produce by sale of the abbey lands ill employed, 257. Pillage, 258, 259.
- More, Sir Thomas, quoted respecting old versions of the Bible, 171, *note.* Employed to write against Tindal's version, 209. His character influenced by the times, *ib.* His devotion, 210. Controversial works, 211. His spirit of persecution, *ib.* He is accused, 218. Is cited before the council to take the oath of the succession, and refuses the preamble, 220. His trial, 222. His defence *ib.*, 223. His calm behaviour on the scaffold, 223. Various speeches he made, recorded, *ib.* Writings, 253, 312.
- Music, Church, 29, 40, 46.
- Muster-books, by way of census, 260.

N.

- Nix, Bishop of Norwich, saying of, 197, 204.
- Nonconformists unwilling to wear the square cap, &c., 346. Their clergy, 349. Ejected from their benefices, 368. See PURITANS. Discontented with Laud's enforcing the Church rubric; they desire to emigrate to Holland, 382. Detained by an embargo; the chiefs of the sect, Pym, Hambden,

Nonconformists—*continued.*

and Cromwell, remain, 382. The different sects of, 437. They emigrate, 439.

Norfolk, dukes of, 243, 341. *See* HOWARD.

Northumberland, Dudley, duke of, a patron of Hooper, 254. Protector in minority of Edward VI., 263. He marries his son to Lady Jane Grey, 267. His death, 312.

Northumbria, introduction of the Christian religion, 20. Avowal by Coifi the priest, that the gods of his superstition were powerless to do good, 22. Coifi burns his temples, and Paulinus establishes the religion of Christ, 23.

Nun, the Kentish, revelations feigned by her, to bring an image into repute, 217. She declares against Henry VIII.'s divorce from Catharine, *ib.* She predicts his death, *ib.* Her prophecies collected, and preached on by the Franciscans, *ib.* Her rash accomplices in these impostures hasten her trial and execution, *ib.* Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More brought into trouble by their folly in listening to her, 218, 223.

O.

Odin, the god, 10; and Friga, 34.

Odo, the primate, supports the views of Dunstan, 50. His insolence to young Edwy, 51. His cruelty to Elgiva, whom he brands, *ib.* His death, 53.

Oglethorpe, Bishop of Carlisle, 326.

Oisinga, Saxon title explained, 13.

Oldcastle, Sir John, or Lord Cobham, denounced for heresy, 179. Henry V. interrogates him respecting a book of heresies belonging to his library, *ib.* His determined reply, *ib.* Resistance to the service of a citation, 180. His profession of faith, *ib.* Frowned on by Henry, he appeals to the Pope, 182. His examination, 183. He abides by his writing, on his faith, as delivered to Archbishop Arundel, *ib.* Trial, 184. His prayer of repentance, and prophetic words against the then existing Church, 185. His disputation with his cruel judges, 185-188. His sentence to the flames, 189. His reply, *ib.* Rumours of insurrection prejudice him with Henry V., 190. Reward for taking Cobham, alive or dead, *ib.* After four years discovered in Wales, he is hanged above a fire, 191. Final consequences of his firmness of religious principle and his martyrdom, *ib.*

Olver, the Norwegian, 37.

Omer's, St, the college was founded by the Jesuits, 333.

Orange, Prince of, assassination of, 342.

Orange, William III., his preparations against James II., 454. He lands at Torbay, 457.

Oriental, philosophy of the Persians, &c., 151. Oriental MSS. of the Bodleian Library, 381.

Osbern, biography of Dunstan, 51.

Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury, compiles a liturgy, which is adopted, 62.

Oswald, son of Ethelfrith, slays Cadwallon the British hero, 24. Defeated by Penda, 25.

Oswy, an Anglo-Saxon king, maintains the Christian worship, 25.

Oxford, endowment of its colleges, 166. Inclined to the tenets of the Lollards, 178. Twelve inquisitors appointed, *ib.* Study of Hebrew and Greek introduced, 200. Colleges endowed by Wolsey, 225. Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, fellow-prisoners at, 285. Death of Ridley and Latimer, 291-299. Of Cranmer, 312-316. Munificence and endowments of Laud, 380, 381.

P.

Paganism of the Anglo-Saxons, 9-11. Its want of influence with the Saxon nations, 26. Is readily overthrown by the missionaries from Rome, 27. Each king being converted, his people willingly adopt the new religion, *ib.* Heathen priests make small resistance to the religious revolution, 28. Savage mythology of the Danes, 32. The Scalds and bards, *ib.* Worship of Odin, 33-36. Obscene and sanguinary rites, 37.

Palmer, Julius, martyrdom of, 317. He had witnessed the death of Cranmer, *ib.*

Pandulph, legate from Innocent III. in England, 132, *et seq.* He receives John's submission to the Pope, *ib.* Restores to him his crown, 133. Styles him a dutiful son of the Church, 136.

Parishes, limits defined, 41. Registers for marriages, &c., 251.

Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, 206, 327, 328. His doctrine that of Bilney and Barnes, 327. His directions relative to the oath of supremacy, 335. His moderation, 369. His tomb violated by the Puritans, 399.

Parliament generally subservient to the will of Henry VIII., 222, 225. Elizabeth attentive to its enactments, 335. Upon the Gunpowder-treason it enacts that the oath of allegiance should be taken by Papists, 368. The Commons refuse supplies to Charles I., 370. The Lords fine Dr Manwaring, who preached that the king had power to

Parliament—*continued*.

- levy taxes, 379. The Parliament releases Prynne and his companions, 384. Bill proposed against bishops voting, 386. "Protestation," similar to the Scottish "Covenant," 387. The "Committee of Religion," the "Root and Branch" parliamentarians propose measures subversive of the Church, 388-391. They abolish Episcopacy, 429. Confiscations of Church property, *ib*. Return of Charles II., 430.
- Parr, Katharine, queen of Henry VIII., 240. She favours the Reformation, *ib*. Is in danger of condemnation for heresy, 244.
- Patrick, St., at Glastonbury, 44.
- Paul IV., Pope, contemporary with Elizabeth, 324.
- Paulinus sent from Rome as coadjutor to Augustine, 20.
- Paul's, St., founded, 16. Synod held in, 169. The cathedral threatened with demolition, 399. Rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren, 443.
- Paul's Cross, St., 195. Bearing a faggot there, commanded to those who recanted, 203. The "invisible angels" pretended miracle, 269. Dr Bill appointed preacher there by Elizabeth, 323. Parker, 327.
- Pead, son of the Mercian king Penda, establishes the Christian religion, 25.
- Pecock, Reynold, Bishop of Chichester, account of his opinions, 193. Accused of heresy, 194. Saves his life by an act of abjuration, *ib*. His writings burnt, 195. His opinions, 372.
- Pelagius born in Britain, 150. Denied original sin, *ib*. He advocated free will, *ib*. His contest with Augustine, *ib*.
- Pembroke, Earl of, negotiates between John and the barons, 137.
- Pembroke, Earl of, on the trial of Archbishop Laud, 416.
- Penance, held to be of the character of a sacrament, 228.
- Penda, king of Mercia, a heathen, 24. His victories, *ib*. 25.
- Pennington, Alderman, 386.
- Percy, Lord, the earl marshal, 169.
- Persecution, the tenth, 7, 8. Of the Albigenses and Waldenses, 162, 165. Of the Franciscan friars, 165. Of the Lollards, 174, 191. Of the Reformers by Henry VIII., 202, *et seq.*, 236. In the reign of Mary I., 267, *et seq.*
- Persons, Father, compassionates the persecutors for their trouble in condemning so many heretics, 301.
- Peter's pence, a tribute to the Bishop of Rome, 91, 106.
- Peter of Pomfret, prediction by, 132. His play on the words Ascension Day, *ib*. It is fulfilled, but the prophet is hanged, 133.
- Peters, Hugh, 407. His abuse of Laud, 412, 418.
- Petre, Father, confessor to James II., 448.
- Philip Augustus, King of France, 127.
- Philip II., and Mary, 267. His confessor Alonso de Castro, 288. His designs upon Elizabeth, 300. Interferes in her favour, 322, 342. His wars in Flanders, 342. The Armada fitted out against England, 343.
- Philosophy, schools of Roman, their influence, 5.
- Philpot, Archdeacon, assists Bradford in disputation, 289. His courage, 303. Desire to make him change his resolution, 303-307. Burnt in Smithfield, 307.
- Pilgrimage, early, to Jerusalem and Syria, 8. Discouraged, on the Reformation, 251.
- Pius IV. sends a nuncio with a conciliatory letter to Elizabeth, 332.
- Pius V. excommunicates Queen Elizabeth, 334. His pretensions, *ib*. Propagandists of his bull against the English queen, 340.
- Pocklington, Dr, deprived of his benefice, 391.
- Pocock, Bishop, the traveller, delivers the counsel of Grotius to Archbishop Laud to fly, 405.
- Pole, Cardinal, 261. As legate, orders the trial (by a commission of prelates) of the bishops Ridley and Latimer, 294. Is the head of the Marian persecution, 311, 319. He dies at the same time as Mary, 326.
- Pontigny, Cistercian abbey of, 91, 97.
- Popes, early Roman pontiff, some enumerated: Gregory the Great, 11, *et seq.* Boniface, 21. Gregory VII., or Hildebrand, 61, 63, 65. Alexander III., 74. Innocent III., 128-137. Urban V., 167. Urban VI., 175. &c., &c. Paul IV., 324. Pius IV., 392. Pius V., 334.
- Poor, relief to them administered by ministers of religion, 41, 48. Question whether the seizure of lands belonging to monasteries and convents would be an ultimate benefit to the poor or not, 198. Edward VI.'s endowments of hospitals for their education and relief of the sick, 266, 294.
- Premunire*, statute passed in the reign of Richard II., 193. It is made the engine for the destruction of Wolsey, 202. The higher clergy being liable to its penalties, compromise with Henry VIII., *ib*., 335, 428.
- Prague, Jerome of, martyrdom of, 192.
- Prayer Book, the Common, 388, 435, 436, 438.
- Prayers for the dead, declared by Convocation to be good and charitable, 228.

Presbyterian Church government in part compatible with an Episcopal Church, 426.

Presbyterians, their proposals to Charles I., 428. Their strength in the reign of Charles II., 435. The Act of Uniformity proposed, *ib.* Letter from Calamy proving discontent with the Declaration, 436.

Prideaux, bishop of Worcester, 400.

Priestcraft of the time of St Dunstan, 49. In the time of Lanfranc, 64. Of the Druids and Kelts, 95.

Principles, the Two; or Dualism, 151. Of right and wrong, 156.

Printing, importance of its invention, 199. On religion forbidden by Mary I., 269.

Protestants, they come into power at the court of Edward VI., 252. They hold a synod at Dort, 366, 374. *See* REFORMATION and CHURCH.

Proto-martyr, 270.

Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton, amerced and condemned to lose their ears by the Star-chamber, 378. Prynne's avowal in his old age of the justice of the sentence, *ib.* He is released by Parliament, 384. His enmity to Laud, 407. He prints the primate's diary, 413. It is brought forward on his trial, *ib.*

Psalmody, the Puritans were all practised in the Psalm Book, 425.

Purgatory, the Pope said to have authority over, 154.

Puritans, their rise and principles, 346. To what they object, *ib.* Their dislike of Rome and of Episcopacy, 348. Their intolerance, 350. The refractory clergy, *ib.* Archbishop Bancroft represses them, but his successor Abbot favours the Puritans, 369. The danger foretold of their triumph over the throne, 370. Their idea of the paramount efficacy of preaching, 372. The chief Puritans prevented from embarking for Holland, 382. Their clergy ape the intolerance, the infallibility, and spiritual despotism of Rome, 383. The Covenant, its object, *ib.* Puritanical party in Parliament, their perseverance, 386-388. The "Root and Branch men," 388. Their desires carried in Parliament, 395-399. Their defacing of churches, 399. Triumph of the Puritans complete, 424, 426. Their confession of faith is Calvinistic, 426. Their hatred of the Church liturgy, 425. They forbid the use of the Book of Common Prayer, 427. They abolish Episcopacy, 429. Their rules and penal statutes, *ib.* Cromwell restrains their ambition and avarice, 430. Their turbulence on the accession of Charles II., 434. Called Dissenters, 442, 443.

Pym detained in England by an embargo, 382. Exhibits articles against Laud, 403.

Q.

Quakers, persecutions of the, 443.

R.

Redwald, king of East Anglia, 16. His successor Eorpwald, 24.

REFORMATION, the, corruptions that led to it, 154-160. The first reformers, 160. Discontent in England respecting Italian priests, 165. John Wicliffe, 167. Ejected from the mastership of Canterbury Hall, he appeals to the Pope, *ib.* His opposition to the see of Rome, 168-173. His disciples, the Lollards, condemned to the flames, 174, 175. Progress of the Reformation, 202, *et seq.*, 209, 215, 227, 234. The Six Articles, 238. The Romanists have almost influence with Henry VIII. to stay the Reformation, 240, 246. The Reformation impoverishes the clergy, 257. Statesmen aggrandised and enriched themselves by it, 264. *See* CHURCH; EDWARD VI.; ELIZABETH.

Register, Church, of parishioners for charitable purposes, 41.

Regular and secular clergy, their distinction, and tendency of either, 49. Presumed purity of the regulars, 164.

Relics, impostures as to them discovered on the suppression of the monasteries, 233.

REVOLUTION, the English, 457-461.

Reynolds, Dr, speaks for the Puritans, at a conference in presence of James I., 356, 364. He conforms, 437. Made bishop of Norwich, 439.

Rich, Lord, shews some kindness to Philpot on his trial, 305.

Richard I. crowned in the lifetime of Henry II., 106. Seized by the Duke of Austria and delivered to the German emperor, 127.

Richard II., in his reign a synod was convened to inquire into the alleged heresy of John Wicliffe, 169. Intention of the Statute of Præmunire, 193.

Ridley, Bishop, his argument with Hooper, 255. His interview with Edward VI. respecting charitable actions, 266. Reconciliation in prison with Hooper, 275. His pious ejaculation to Bradford, 286. His character portrayed, 291. His farewells, 292. His demeanour before the Bishops' Commissioners for the trial of him and Latimer, 294. Acknowledges a spiritual, denies a corporeal presence in the sacrament, *ib.* His degradation upon

Ridley, Bishop—*continued.*

condemnation, 298. His tears for his sister, *ib.* His execution, together with Latimer, 299, 300. His prophetic hopes of the ultimate success of the Reformation, 327.

Rogers, John, proto-martyr in the Marian persecution, declared Rome to be the Church of Antichrist; and also against transubstantiation, 270.

Romans, as conquerors, introduce their superstitions into Britain, 5. Their intolerance of Christianity, 6. The tenth persecution extended to Britain, 7, 8. Their paganism and the Latin language vanish on the Saxon conquest, 10.

Rome, Church of, corrupt spirit of, 43. A system of priesthood, 49. Its unity and supremacy, *ib.* Policy, 50. Wealth and endowments of its Church in various kingdoms, 64. Its authority above kings asserted by Gregory VII., *ib.* Some excuse made for this pontiff's measures, 65. His ambitious views for an universal church-rule possibly beneficial to that age, *ib.* Variance of the Papal system, and doctrines, from true Christianity, *ib.* Kings disposed to seize on Church revenues and possessions threatened with censures and excommunication, 66. Rival Popes, *ib.* Archbishop Anselm attends Urban at Rome, 67. Question of investiture, 68. Adjustment of it, and homage by prelates to princes, permitted, 69. Enjoins celibacy for priests, 50, 53, 69. Its power to protect offending clergy from the secular authority, 76. Privilege of the canons, *ib.* Excommunication, 95. Its arrogance in deposing princes, 97. Interdicts, *ib.* Its power to coerce kings, *ib.* Pretensions of Rome epitomised in the struggle regarding Becket; Alexander III.'s pontificate, 98, 123. How far its authority submitted to by Henry II., 125. The Pope deposes John of England, 131. Designs of Rome, 132. John resigns, and receives his crown back again from Pandulph, 133. Consequences resulting therefrom, 134, *et seq.* England esteemed but a fief of the Papal See, 139. The fourth Lateran council, 140. Usurpations of Rome established, *ib.* Corruptions, doctrinal and practical, of the Romish Church, 141. View of the Papal system, 141–151. What advantages were in reality derived to Christianity therefrom, 141. Asylum or sanctuary, *ib.* Reading of Scriptures forbidden, 143. "Tradition, or the unwritten word," set up instead, *ib.* Worship of saints, 144. Relics and bones of saints, *ib.*, 145,

Rome—*continued.*

233. Images, 147. Healing by relics, &c., *ib.* Papal bulls, *ib.* Miracles, *ib.* The Virgin Mary; Romish doctrine and worship, *ib.* Images of the Virgin, 148. Modern idolatry, 149. How far the Church of Rome resembles heathenism, *ib.* Doctrines of Pelagius, 150. Fanatics, 152. Purgatory, 154. Indulgences sold by the Pope, *ib.* Object of pilgrimages: miraculous images and portraits, *ib.* Masses for the repose of the dead, 155. Confession and absolution, *ib.* Doctrine of transubstantiation, 157. Plenitude of power and supremacy above kings, claimed by the Pope, 158. Secular laws not to avail against his decrees, 159. Infallibility of the Pope, *ib.* Rise of the Reformation, 160, *et seq.* Franciscans and Dominicans, 161, 162. These religious orders turn the popular tide that had been in favour of a Church reform, 162. But they become the scandal of the Church by vice and impostures, *ib.* The Three Dispensations, and book called the Eternal Gospel, described, 164. Many of the Franciscans consigned to the stake for heresy, 165. The Inquisition instituted by their adversaries the Dominicans, *ib.* Wicliffe designates the Pope as the "Man of Sin," 168. The assertion of infallibility of the Romish Church precluded all correction of error, 194. Children compelled to set fire to the faggots at the execution of their parents, 196, 197. Overthrow of the Papal authority in England, 197, *et seq.* The Pope at first favours Henry VIII., 200, 201. Cranmer advises the dissolution of the monasteries as being the strongholds of Popery, 224. Impostures of the Romanists divulged, 233. The true cross, *ib.* Saint Apollonia's teeth, *ib.* Vial of the Saviour's blood, *ib.* The Rood of Grace, a crucifix, *ib.* Gold from Becket's shrine, 234. His two skulls, *ib.* The Pope cites Henry VIII. to appear at Rome, and interdicts his kingdom, *ib.* Opprobrious names indulged to the king, *ib.* Henry's declaration against the Pope's tyranny and usurpations, *ib.* The Romanists retain much power under Henry VIII., 240, 243, 246. The English in the reign of Mary I. zealous for the restoration of the Romish worship, 268. The priests turn the reformed ministers out of the churches and celebrate mass, *ib.* The Church of Antichrist, 270. The Romish Church loses all favour with the English people by the PERSECUTION, and by the death of Cranmer, 316. Tor-

Rome—*continued*.

ments inflicted upon "heretics" in the prisons, 319. Commissioners for Inquisition; their power, *ib*. Those accused, who died in prison, cast into the fields and denied sepulture, 320. Two hundred and eighty persons burnt in the four years of the Marian Persecution, *ib*. The Romanists conform to Elizabeth's church-rule, until ordered to the contrary by the Pope, 329. Pius IV. attempts a reconciliation with Elizabeth, 331. The Romanists place their hopes in Mary Stuart, 333. Pius V., 334. The persecutions of the Romish Church horrible wherever it possessed authority, 335. Sufferings of the Protestants in Paris, 336. The massacre of the Hugonots, general on St Bartholomew's day, *ib*. The Pope excommunicates Elizabeth, 334. The nation is exasperated against the Papists on account of the Gunpowder plot, 367. James I. and Charles I. tolerant towards the Romanists, *ib*., 375. A reunion with the Holy See not possible, 375. * The Papists imprudent in provoking Charles II., 434. They are accused of the fire of London, 441. Scheme for making the Dissenters instrumental in the restoration of Popery, 443. The aid of Louis XIV. expected, *ib*. The Romanists confident of success, *ib*. Flight of James II., 458.

Rudyard, Sir Benjamin, 381. His eloquence, 388.

Russell, Sir John, sent against the Devonshire and Cornish insurgents, 261, 263.

S.

Sacrament, the real presence in the holy, 172, 177. Cobham declares his belief respecting the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, 183. The opinion of the Church, 184. What three sacraments declared by Convocation necessary to salvation, 228. Serious insurrections relative to the abrogated sacraments, 229-231.

Saints, reverence to the memory of, 144. Prayer at the martyr's grave at length addressed to the departed saint himself, *ib*. Relics, *ib*. Fragments of mortality preserved as relics of saints, 145. Crucifixes, *ib*. Fanatics aspiring to the reputation of, 152. To address saints as intercessors declared laudable, 228. Relics of the saints, 233.

Sampson, Dean of Christ Church, a Nonconformist, 347.

Sancroft, integrity and high character of the primate, 444. His reply to Mary, princess of Orange, *ib*. His resistance to James II.'s Declaration abolishing tests, 445. His course of conduct, 452.

Sarpi, F. Paolo, history of the council of Trent, 365.

Saunders, Laurence, condemned on his denial of transubstantiation, 273.

Sautre, William, priest, his martyrdom, being a Lollard, 175.

Saxon conquerors introduce their idolatry into Britain, 9. Ferocity, and valuable qualities, *ib*. Human sacrifices, and priests, *ib*. Complete revolution in superstitions and manners, on their conquest of Britain, 10. Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, 11-25.

Scalds, or poets of the Danes, 32. Account of their tenets, 33.

Scandinavians, worship, 32. Their gods, giants, and heroes, 33-35. The Edda, their book, 36.

Schools established by the early bishops in England: that of Canterbury celebrated for the ancient languages, 40. At York, 42. University of Cambridge, 71. Endowments of the two universities, 166. Foundations by Wolsey at Oxford (Christ Church), and at Ipswich, 225. *See* OXFORD.

Scory, Bishop, returns from exile, 327.

Scotland, Church of, similar to the Genevan, 349. Knox a disciple of Calvin, *ib*. James I., his opinion of a Scottish presbytery, 361. Affairs of the Covenant, 383. Contest between Charles I. and the Covenanters, 384. Enmity to Laud the primate, 385. Terms offered by the Presbyterians to Charles I., 428. Power of this party, 434.

Scrivener, John, burnt, 197.

Scriptures, reading of them discouraged, 143. By whom condemned, 165. Wicliffe defends the use and reading of the Bible, 168. His version, 171. Erasmus's version of the New Testament, 203. The possessing or giving an English Testament forbidden, 204-208. Tindal's translation, 208. It is prohibited, *ib*. Coverdale's Bible licensed, 235. Henry VIII. again prohibits the New Testament, &c., because they were reviled by the Romanists, 246.

Sebert, king of Essex, a Christian convert, 16.

Seraphic order, or Franciscans, 161.

Seymour, Edward, Earl of Hertford, 250. Lord Protector; created Duke of Somerset, *ib*. *See* SOMERSET.

Slaves from England sent to Rome, 11.

Slaves—*continued*.

English, sold by the Danish invaders, 58.

Shaxton, Bishop, committed to prison, 238.

Sheldon, Archbishop, 432.

Shelton, Sir John, inhumanity of, 285.

Sherlock, Bishop, 445.

Sidney, Algernon, conspiracy of, 441.

Six Articles, the, 238, 262.

Smith, Dr, sermon of, 299.

Smith, Robert, a martyr, lines addressed to his children, 318, *note*.

Smithfield, the fires of Persecution lit there, 214, 270, 289, 307.

Society, its condition during the dark ages, 141. The civil power insufficient to repress private feuds, 142.

Socinians, their opinions, 265. One burnt by James I., 367.

Somerset, Duke of, uncle of Edward VI., is appointed lord protector, 250.

Charged with spoliation, 257. Bestows church preferments upon laymen, *ib*. He destroys the abbeyes, 259. His downfall, 263.

South, Dr, comparison of Puritanism with Jesuitism, 384, *note*.

Spain, persecution in, 319. The Jesuits established in, 337. Philip II. prosecutes a war of extermination in Flanders, 342.

Sprat, Bishop of Rochester, 452.

Stanley, Sir William, and his regiment desert in Flanders, 348.

Star-chamber, the, fines Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton, 378-408.

Stephen, king, subservient to the wishes of the Roman pontiff, 71.

Stigand, deposition of Archbishop, 59.

Stillington, Dr, 445.

Stokesley, Bishop of London, 214.

Story, Dr, persecutor of Protestants, 304, 305, 321. His insolent boasts in the House of Commons, 325.

Strafford, execution of; his affecting parting with Laud, 406, 407.

Supralapsarians, doctrine of the, 366,

T.

Tailor, Dr, his interviews with John Lambert, 236.

Tankerfield, George, his constancy when at the stake, 317.

Taylor, Dr Jeremy, quotation from, 150, *note*, 348.

Taylor, Dr Rowland, accused, 279. His servant, John Hull, entreats him to fly, 280. Rebuke to Bishop Gardiner, *ib*. His parting with his wife, son, and servant, 281. Account of his mar-

Taylor, Dr Rowland—*continued*.
tyrdom at Hadleigh, in Suffolk, 284, 285.

Tests, Declaration of James II., dispensing with them, causes the English Revolution, 445, *et seq*.

Theodore, character of Archbishop, 40. His rules, canons, and foundations, *ib*.

Thorpe, William, condemned as a Lollard, 177. Speaks on the sacrament, *ib*. Perhaps died in prison, *ib*.

Thurstou, Abbot of Glastonbury, attempts a change in the church service, and is sent back to Normandy, 62.

Tillotson, Archbishop, 445.

Tindal's translation of the New Testament, 207. His itinerant preaching, *ib*. Prints his version at Antwerp, 208. New edition, 209. His brother fined, and the copies burnt, *ib*. His letters to Frith, 212. He encourages Frith to constancy, *ib*. Is put to death at Vilvorde for his religious principles, 215.

Tithes, institution of predial, 39. Fourfold application explained, *ib*. Established throughout the kingdom, 40. Glebe-land, 41. Tithes insufficient to the clergy because of lay-impropriations at the Reformation; a fund subscribed for re-purchasing the impropriations, 373. Diverted to lectureships, *ib*.

Toleration, principle of, 344, 366, 367, 433, 434.

Tonstal, Bishop of London, his wonted humanity, 203-208. Employs More to write against Tindal's version of the New Testament, 209. Treats Hooper on his trial with indignity, 274. Tonalst and Thirby put under surveillance, 331.

Tracy, de Brito, and de Moreville assassinate Becket, 117, *et seq*.

Traditions—fables—idolatry, 2.

Transubstantiation, literal sense of figurative words, 157. Wickliffe opposes the doctrine of, 171. Controversy between Frith, the martyr, and Sir T. More, 213. Disputed of, between John Lambert and Cranmer, 237. The Six Articles, 238. Queen Katharine Parr in peril on this point, 240. Anne Askew condemned on it, *ib*. Also John Rogers, 270; and Laurence Saunders, *ib*. John Leaf, 289. Philpot, 305, 306.

Trelawney, Bishop of Bristol, 446.

Trent, council of, 337.

Truce of God explained, 142. It was to be observed in private feuds on pain of excommunication, *ib*.

Turberville, Bishop, 330.

Turner's History of England, 169, *note*.

Tylsworth, William, executed for religion, 196.

U.

Uffinga, royal Saxon title, 16, 17.

Uniformity, the Act of, and Declaration, 435-437.

Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, period of their chief endowments, 166, 200, 225, 381.

Urban, Pope, his policy on the death of Becket, 121. He fulminates an interdict against Henry II., *ib.* He offers terms to the king, 122.

Urban V. threatens to cite Edward III. to Rome, 167.

Urban VI., pontiff, 172.

Usher, Archbishop, 406.

V.

Valhalla, celestial palace of Odin, 35.

Vane, Sir Harry, 386, 412.

Verulamium—St Alban's, 7.

Virgin Mary, propitiated by worship, 147. Her shrine at Loretto, 148. She is consulted by the Pope regarding the tenet of transubstantiation, 157.

W.

Wales, the Britons of, their wars and victories, 24. Purity of their Christian worship; also their prejudice against the Anglo-Saxons, 31. At length the Welsh priests acknowledge the authority of Rome, 32.

Waldenses, the, 165.

Waller, Sir William, 400.

Walsingham, minister of Queen Elizabeth, 351.

Warham, Archbishop, 203.

Warwick, Earl of, claimant of the English crown, 201.

Watson, Bishop, imprisoned, 331.

Westminster Abbey, synod held in it by Lanfranc to depose Bishop Wulstan, 59.

Weston, Dr, conspicuous as a persecutor of Ridley, and others, 297.

White, Bishop of Lincoln, tries Ridley and Latimer, 294, 295. His funeral sermon for Mary I., 323.

Whitelock manages the evidence against Laud, 408.

Whitgift, Archbishop, quotation from,

Whitgift, Archbishop—*continued.*

350. The Lambeth Articles, 356. Succeeded by Bancroft, 368.

Whittle, a married priest, condemned to the stake, 304.

Wicliffe, his career in the University of Oxford, 167. Is rewarded by Edward III. for his vigorous opposition to Urban V., 168. Is styled the Gospel-Doctor, *ib.* Writes against the Pope's pretensions, *ib.* Sent by the king on a mission to negotiate with the Pope's representative at Bruges, *ib.* Maintains the truth of Scripture, and that they should be used and read, *ib.* His preaching against the Pope and the friars, 169. His disciples, *ib.* Accused of heresy, he is shielded by John of Gaunt, *ib.* He defends himself before the synod at St Paul's, *ib.* Tried by the bishops at Lambeth for heresy, 170. His writings, *ib.* Translates the Old and New Testaments, 171. His illness at Oxford, *ib.* Attacks the Romish doctrines, *ib.* His use of the logic of the schools saves him at Oxford, *ib.* His proselytes named Lollards, 172. Sentence on him at Oxford, *ib.* Retires to his benefice, 173. He died of palsy, *ib.* His Bible never printed: his opinions, *ib.* Readers of his works, not having a licence to do so, liable to be burned, 178. The Council of Constance designated him an obstinate heretic, 192. His bones disinterred and burned, *ib.* His principles adopted by Huss and Luther, 200.

Wihtræd, laws of, 39.

Wilde, Sergeant, his speech against Archbishop Laud, 409.

William the Conqueror, his measures regarding church affairs, 58. His dispute with Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII.), 61. He separates ecclesiastical from civil courts, *ib.* His generous behaviour to Lanfranc, *ib.*

William Rufus, his daring character, 66. Retains the revenues of the See of Canterbury for five years, *ib.* At length nominates Anselm primate, *ib.* His disputes with this prelate, *ib.* Agrees to a suspension of his quarrel with Rome, 67.

William III., the Prince of Orange, welcomed by the English as a deliverer, 457.

Williams, Lord, sees to the execution of Latimer and Ridley, 299. He exhorts Cranmer, 315.

Williams, Archbishop of York; avowed enemy of Laud, 387, 394.

Wolsey, favourite of Henry VIII., his munificence, and patronage of learning, and of the University of Oxford,

Wolsey—*continued*.

199. He becomes the victim to the Statute of *Premunire*, 202. Suppresses forty lesser monasteries, and endows colleges in Oxford and Ipswich, 225.

Wren, Sir Christopher, 443.

Wriothesley, Chancellor to Henry VIII., puts Anne Askew to the rack with his own hands, 242.

Wulstan, spirited appeal of the Bishop, (of Worcester) to the synod, against his deposition, 59. His restora-

Wulstan—*continued*.

tion, through a supposed miracle, 60.

Wyatt's insurrection, 269.

Y.

Ymir, Bore, and Odin, deities of the Scandinavians and Danes, 33.

York, its church founded; the See of Paulinus, 23.

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BX Southey, Robert, 1774-1843.
5055 The book of the church. 7th ed. Lon
S7 Murray, 1859.
1859 xxiv, 486p. 20cm.

Closes with the accession of William

1. Church of England--History. 2. Gt
Church history. I. Title.

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